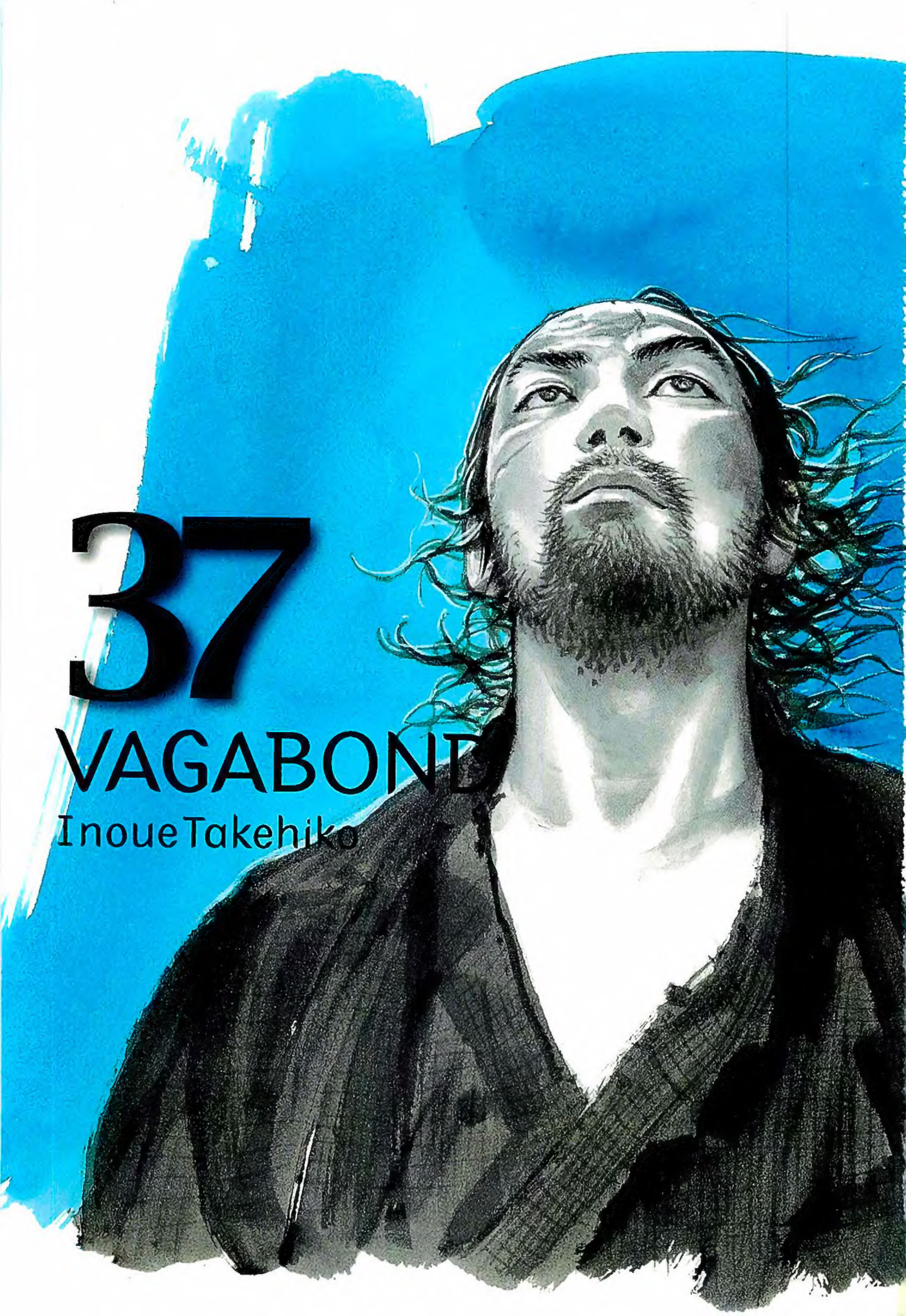
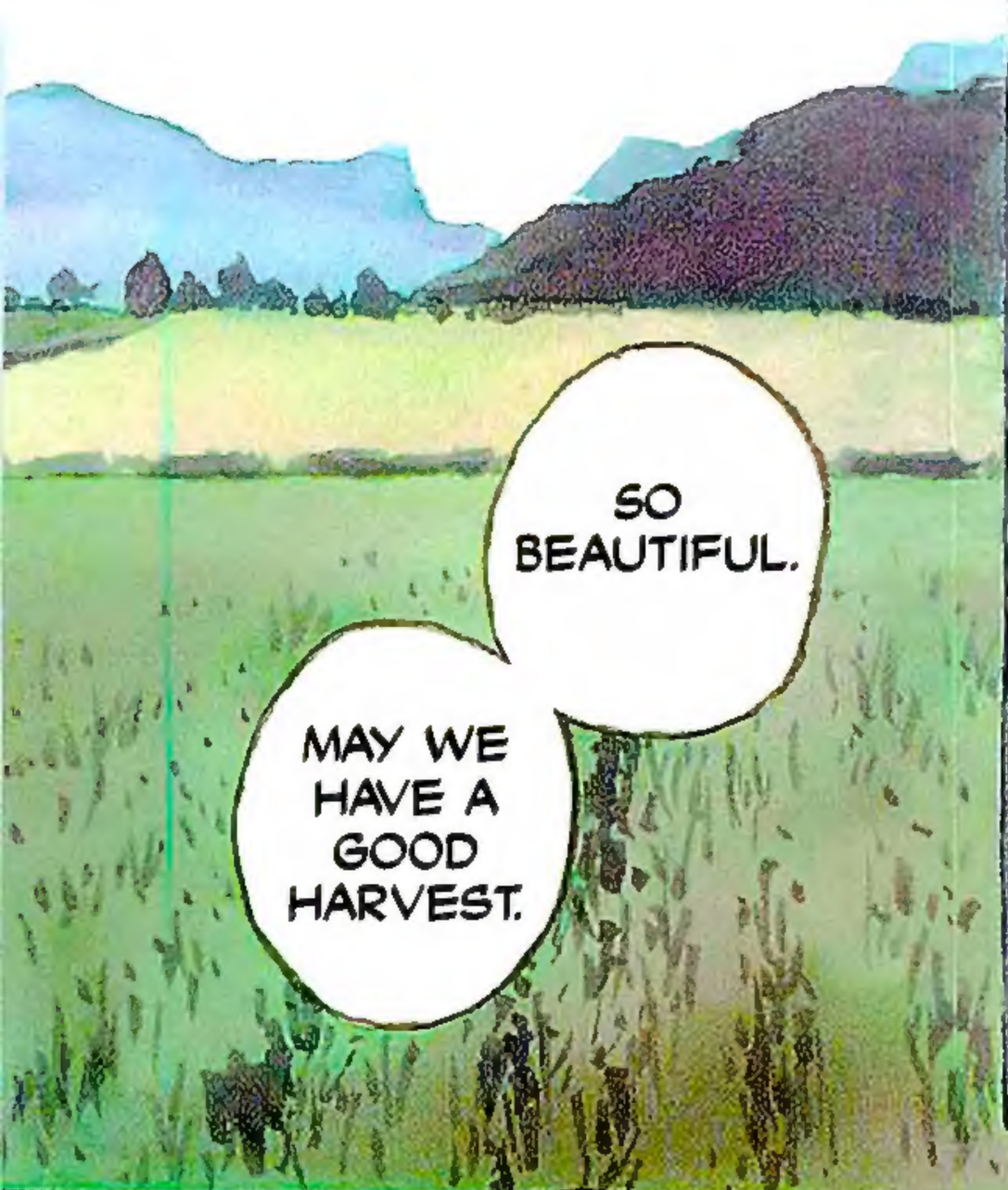
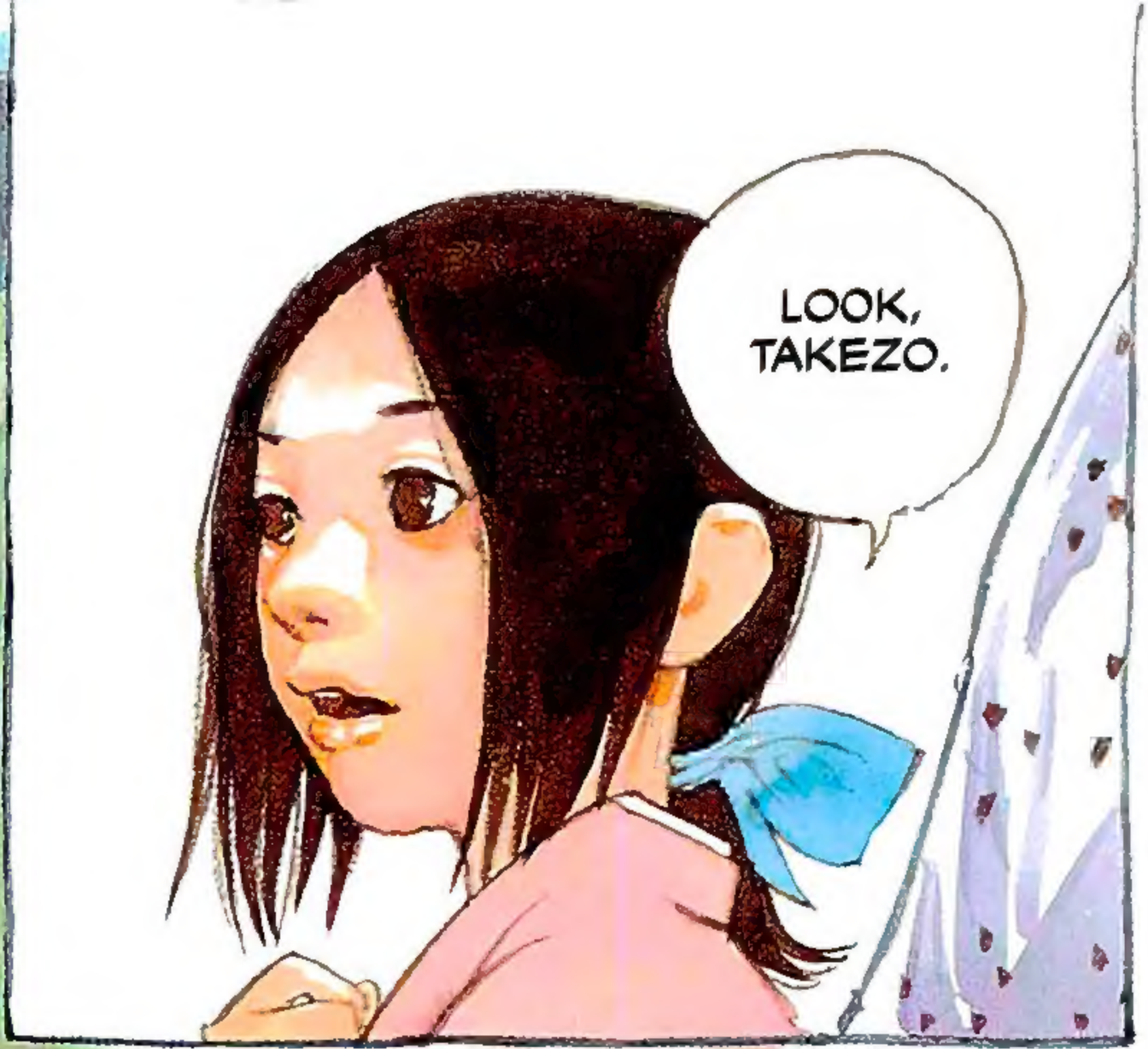
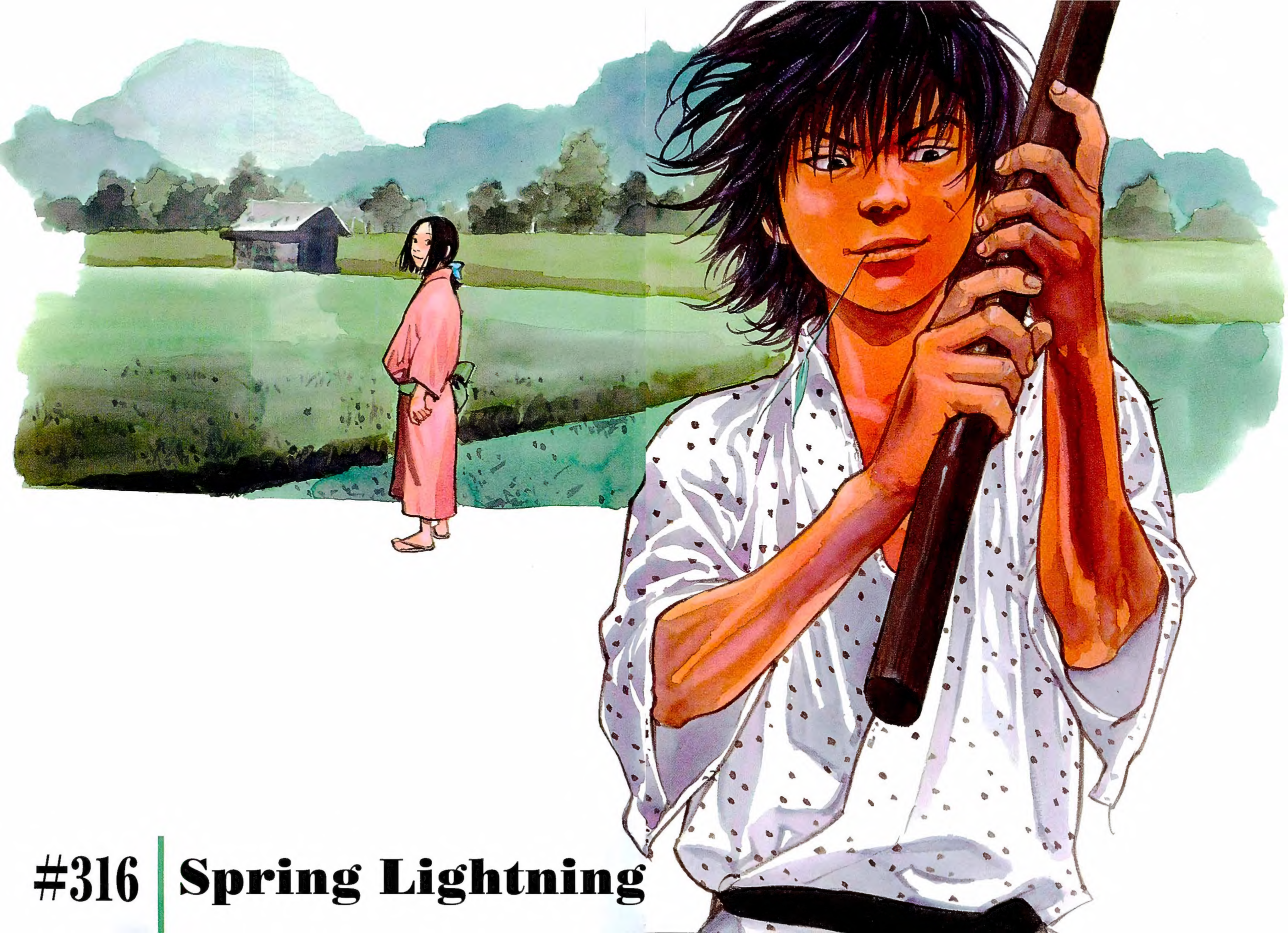

37
VAGABOND
Inoue Takehiko

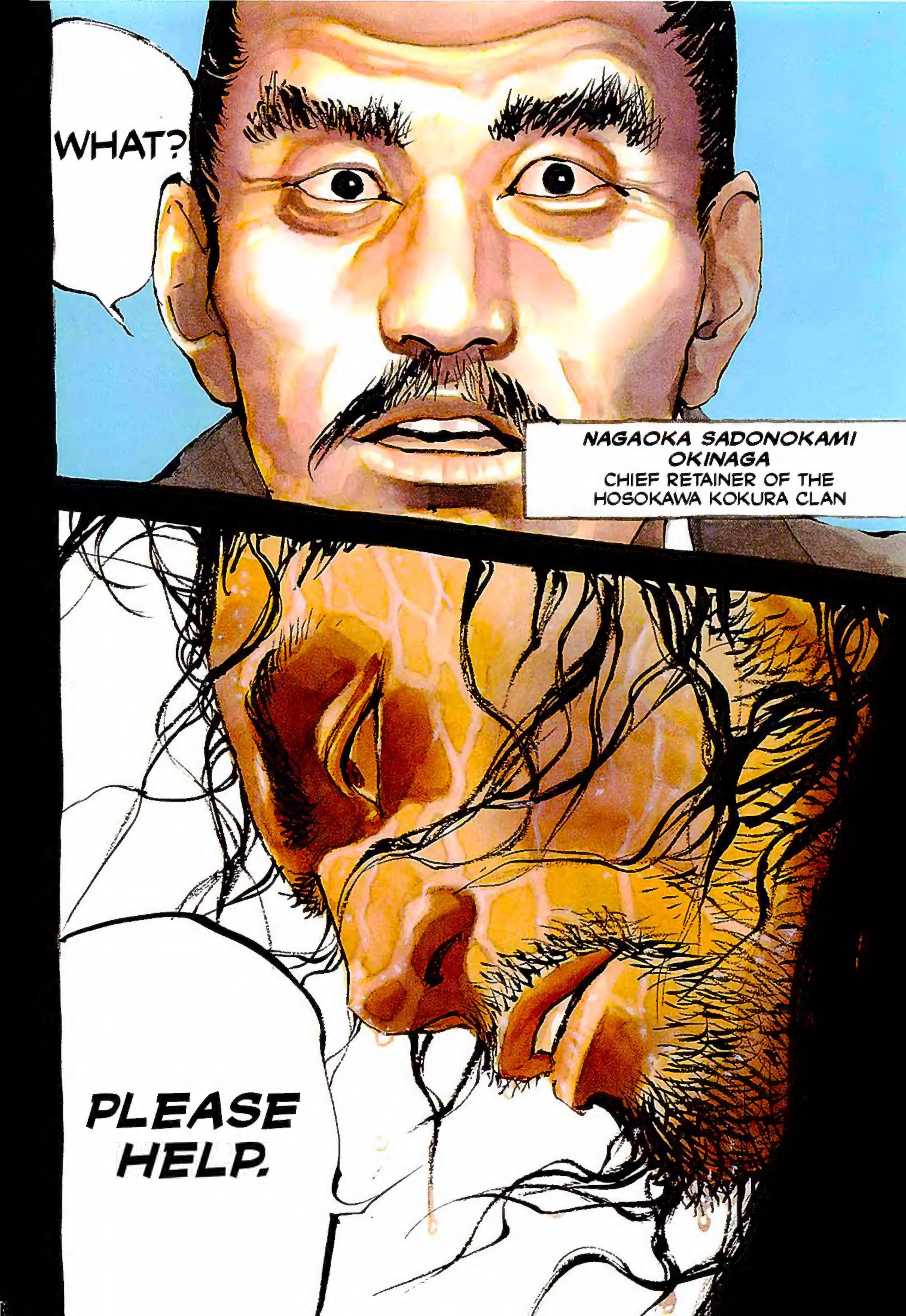

SO BEAUTIFUL.
MAY WE HAVE A GOOD HARVEST.


LOOK, TAKEZO.

NOT INTERESTED



#316 Spring Lightning


WHAT?
NAGAOKA SADONOKAMI OKINAGA
CHIEF RETAINER OF THE HOSOKAWA KOKURA CLAN
PLEASE HELP.

SENSEI?!
DID HE LEAVE?
IT'S GONE.
HIS SWORD'S GONE
ズ゛
ズ゛
ズ゛

IF YOU EVER GET LONELY, LOOK AT THIS TREE.

ARE YOU LONELY, IORI?

EVEN AFTER I DIE, YOUR FATHER WILL BE HERE.

I'LL BE HERE.

TREES LIVE MUCH LONGER THAN MAN...

TIME EASES BY FOR THEM...

KOFF KOFF

YOU SEE, IORI...

LOOK AT THE ROCKS IN THE STREAM.

IF THIS TREE SHOULD DIE AND FALL...

TIME EASES BY MORE SLOWLY FOR ROCKS...

...THAN FOR TREES

AFTER I DIE, I'LL BE THERE.

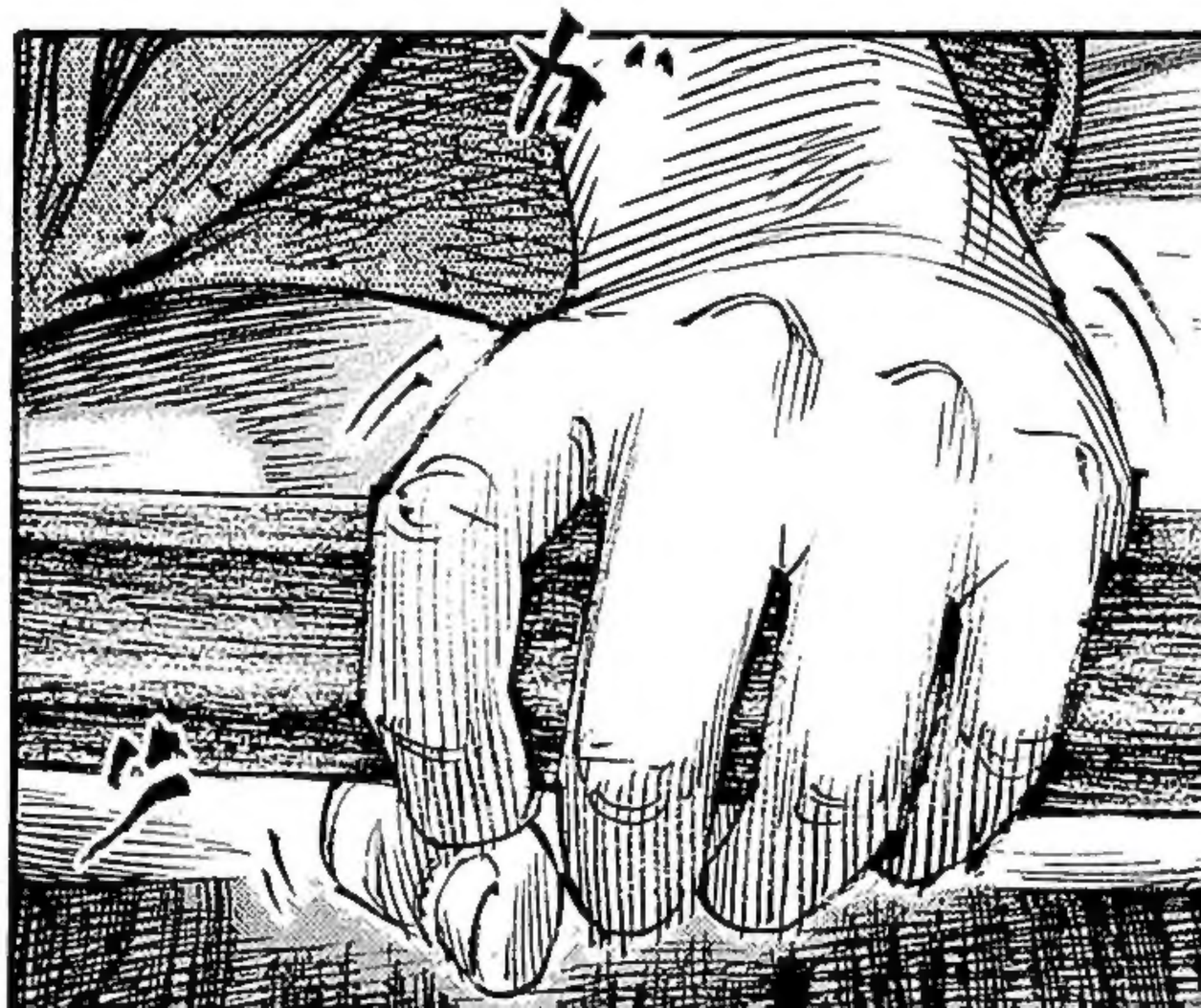
I'LL BE THERE.

DON'T YOU WORRY.

THEY UNDERSTAND WHO YOU REALLY ARE.

THE TREES AND ROCKS HERE...

LIVE YOUR LIFE THE WAY YOU WANT.

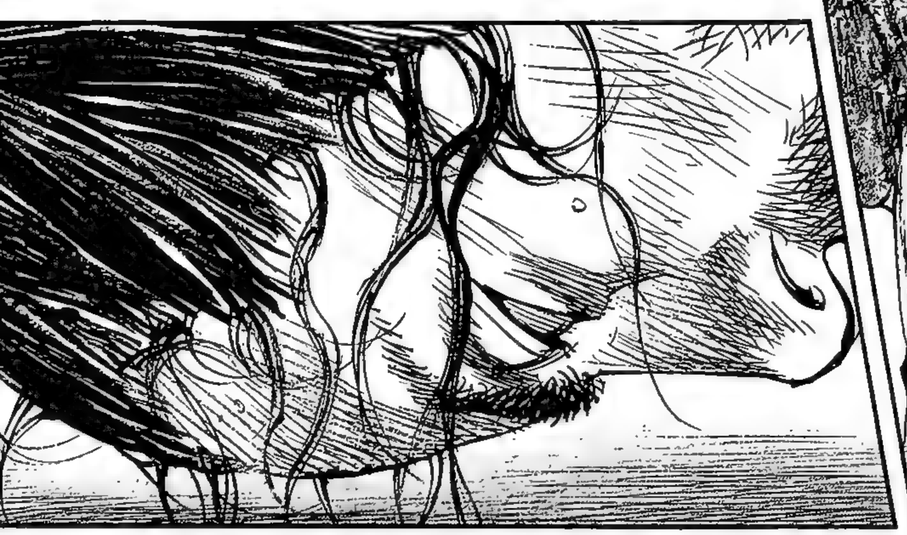


NO, WAIT.
STEP BACK, INSOLENT BASTARD!!
HEY!!
旅籠
...!!
COULD THIS REALLY BE HIM...?

COULD THIS BE MUSASHI?
WHERE'S THAT FEROCITY THAT NEARLY ENVELOPED ME FROM OUR PREVIOUS ENCOUNTER?
THERE ARE CHILDREN ...
WE'RE...
...OUT OF FOOD.
THAT VILLAGE...

IS ON THE VERGE OF DEATH...

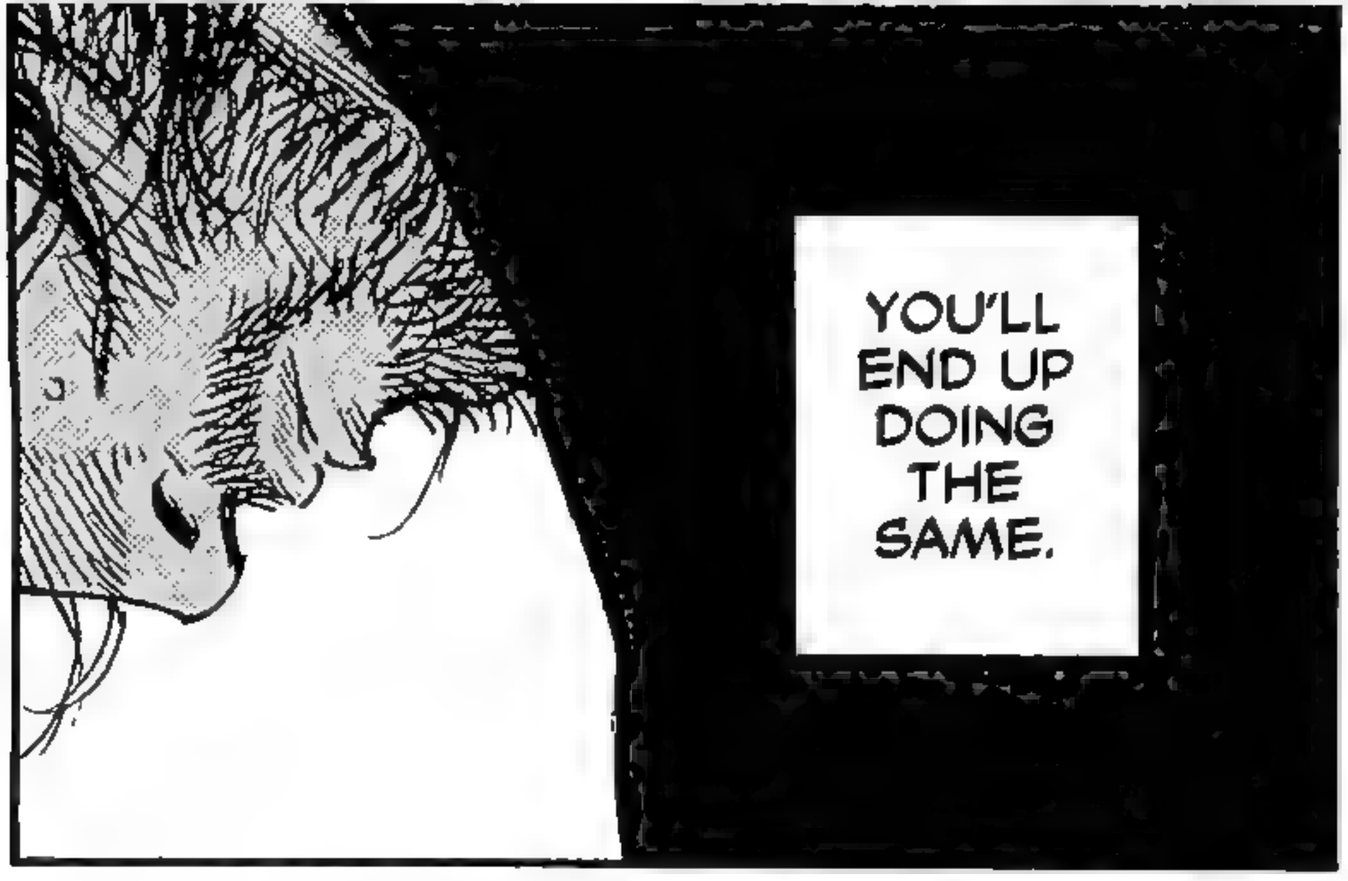
...I BESEECH YOU TO HELP US.
NAGAOKA SADO...



THIS IS MUSA-SHI?
HA HA... HILARI-OUS...

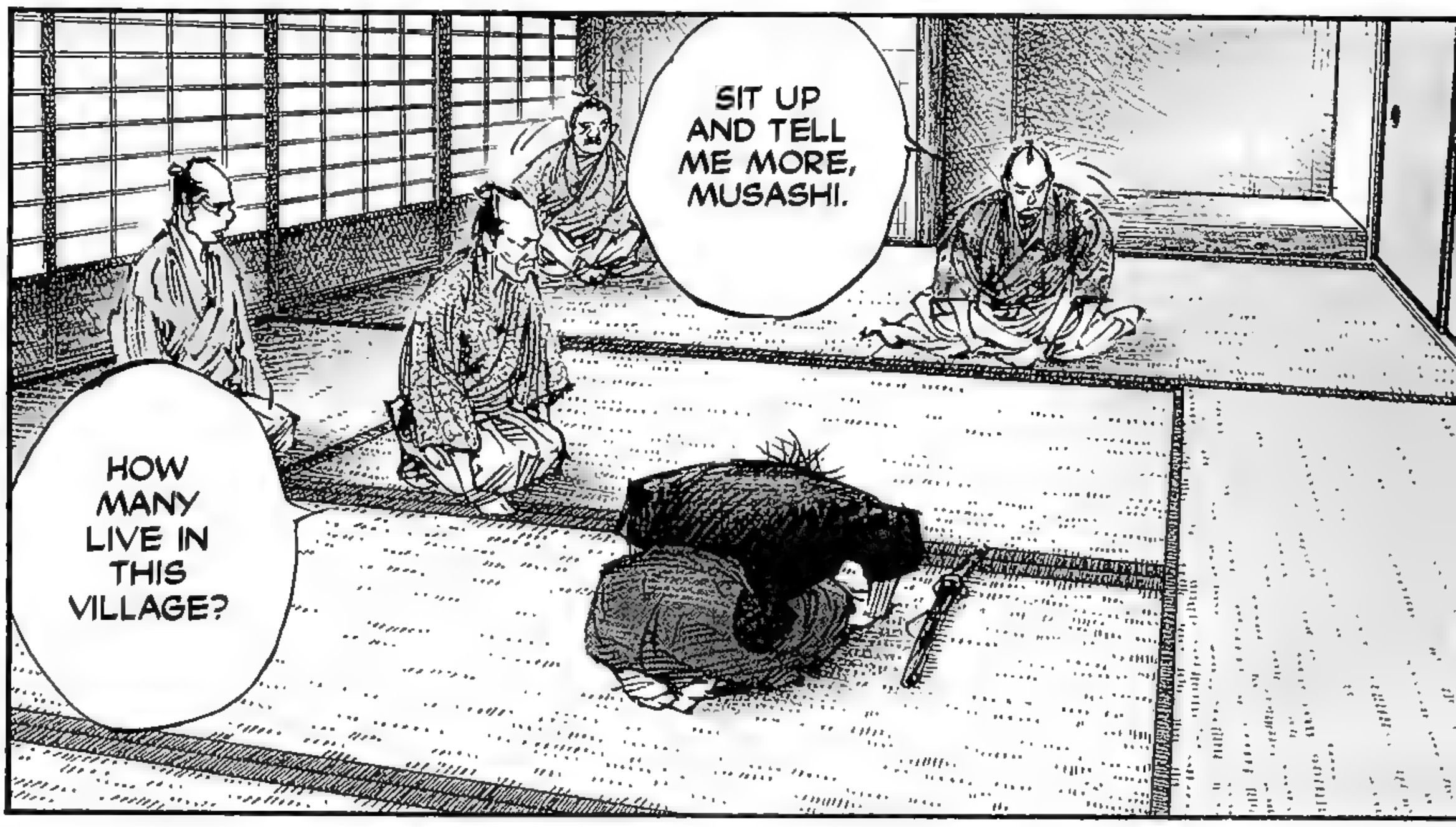
...ABOUT YOU BEING KIND!

YOU DON'T ACTUALLY BELIEVE WHAT THAT OLD WOMAN SAID...
HEY, IS THIS A JOKE?


YOU'LL END UP DOING THE SAME.

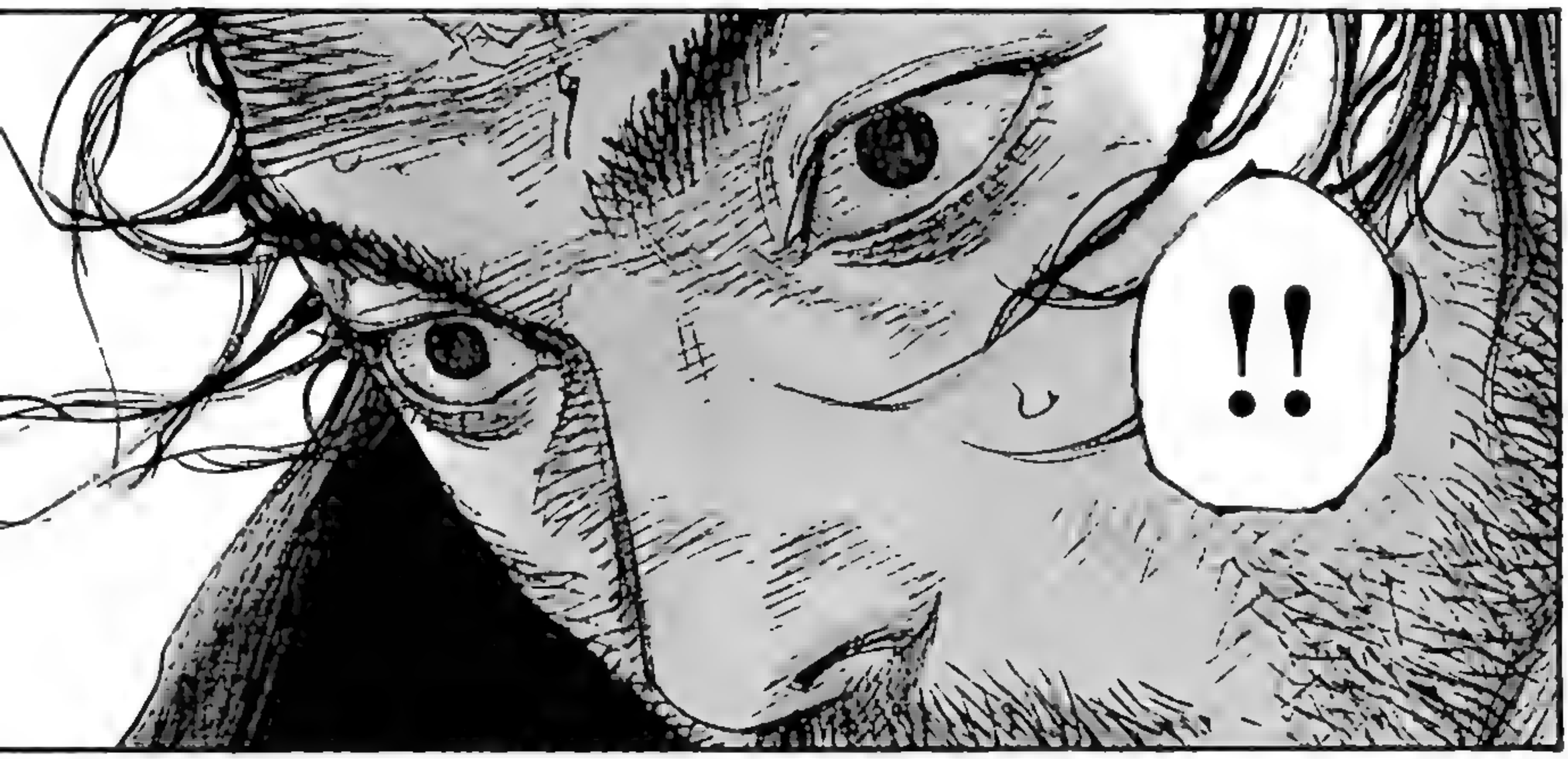
"HELP US," HUH?
SHUT UP.
HA HA!

HUH?


SIT UP AND TELL ME MORE, MUSASHI.
HOW MANY LIVE IN THIS VILLAGE?

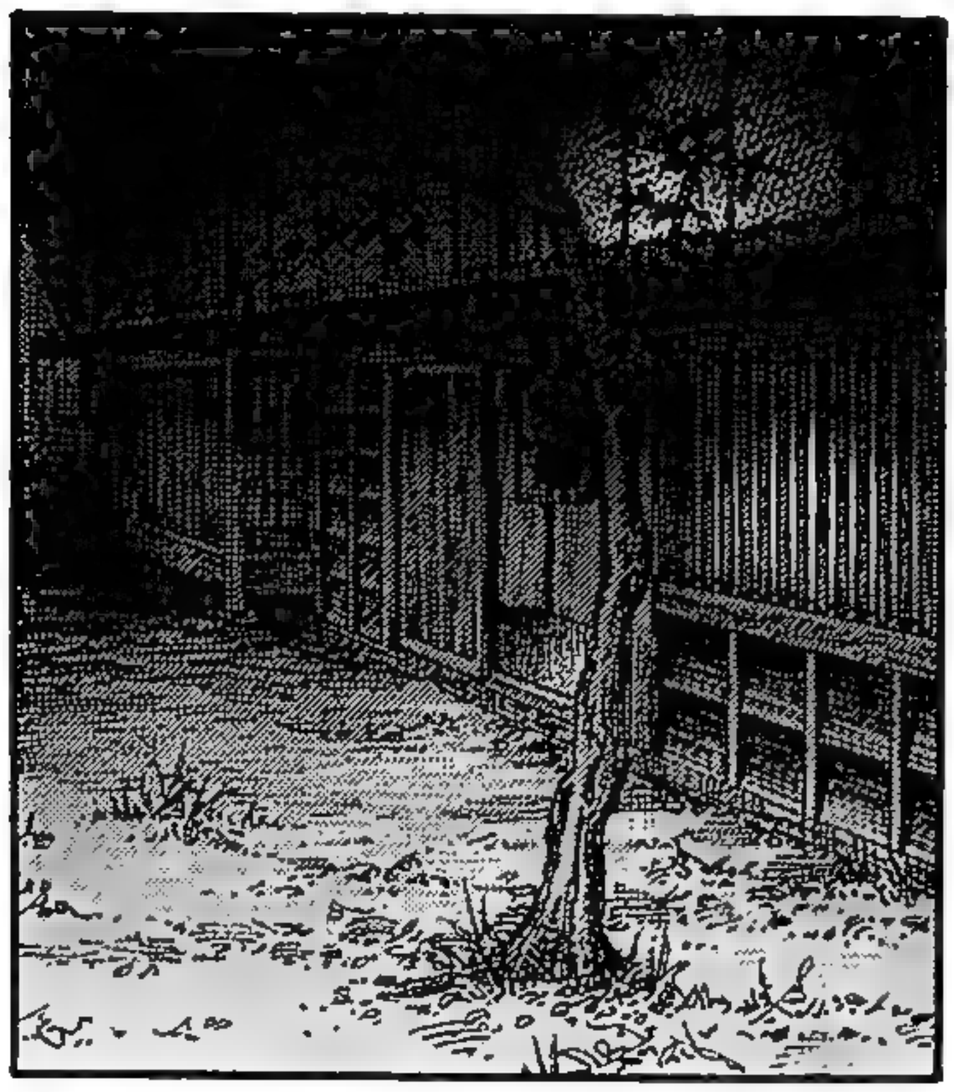
TWENTY-TWO.
I SEE.

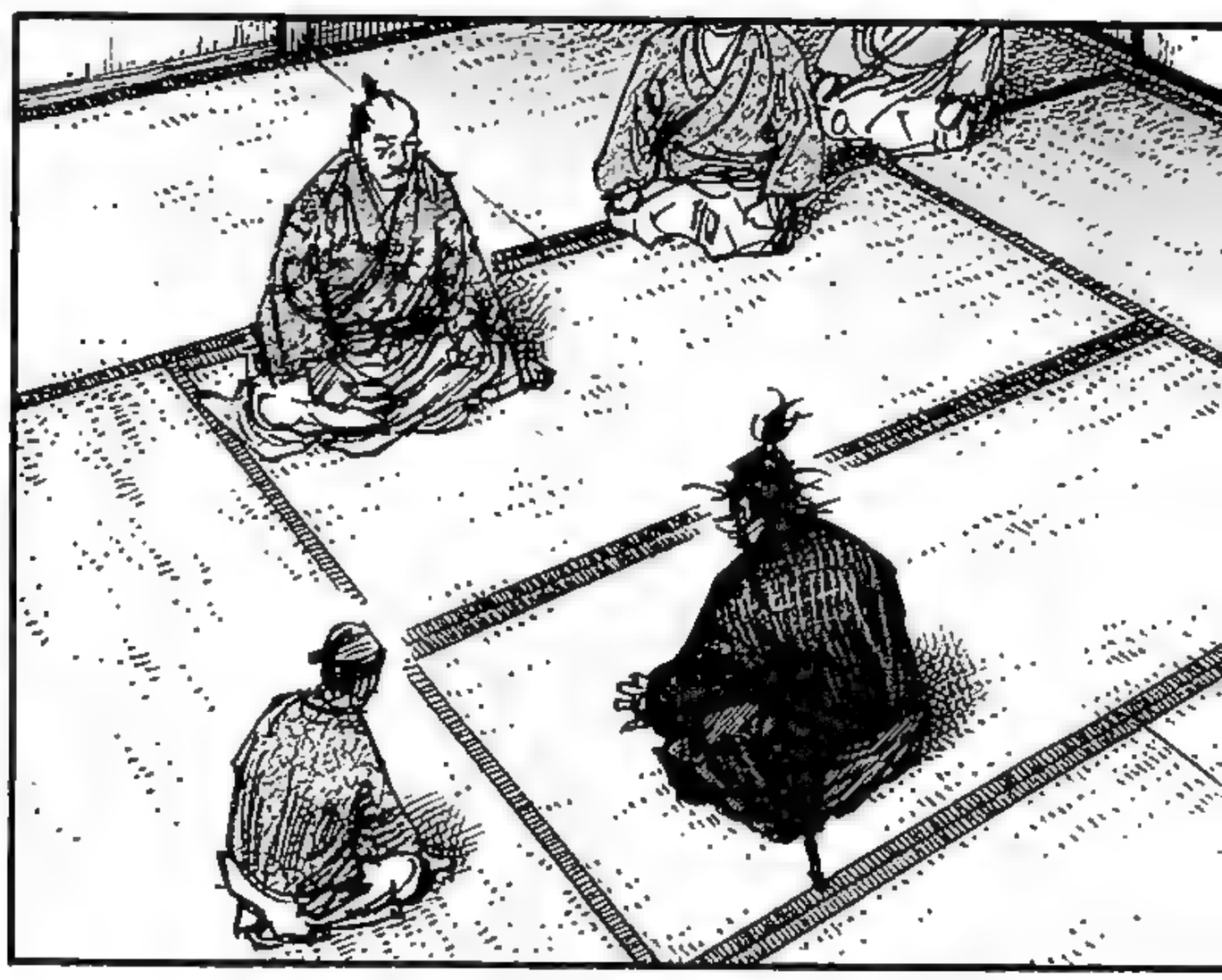
I SHALL SEND PROVISIONS IMMEDIATELY.


!!

BUT IN RETURN, YOU MUST PROMISE...

ARE WE AGREED?

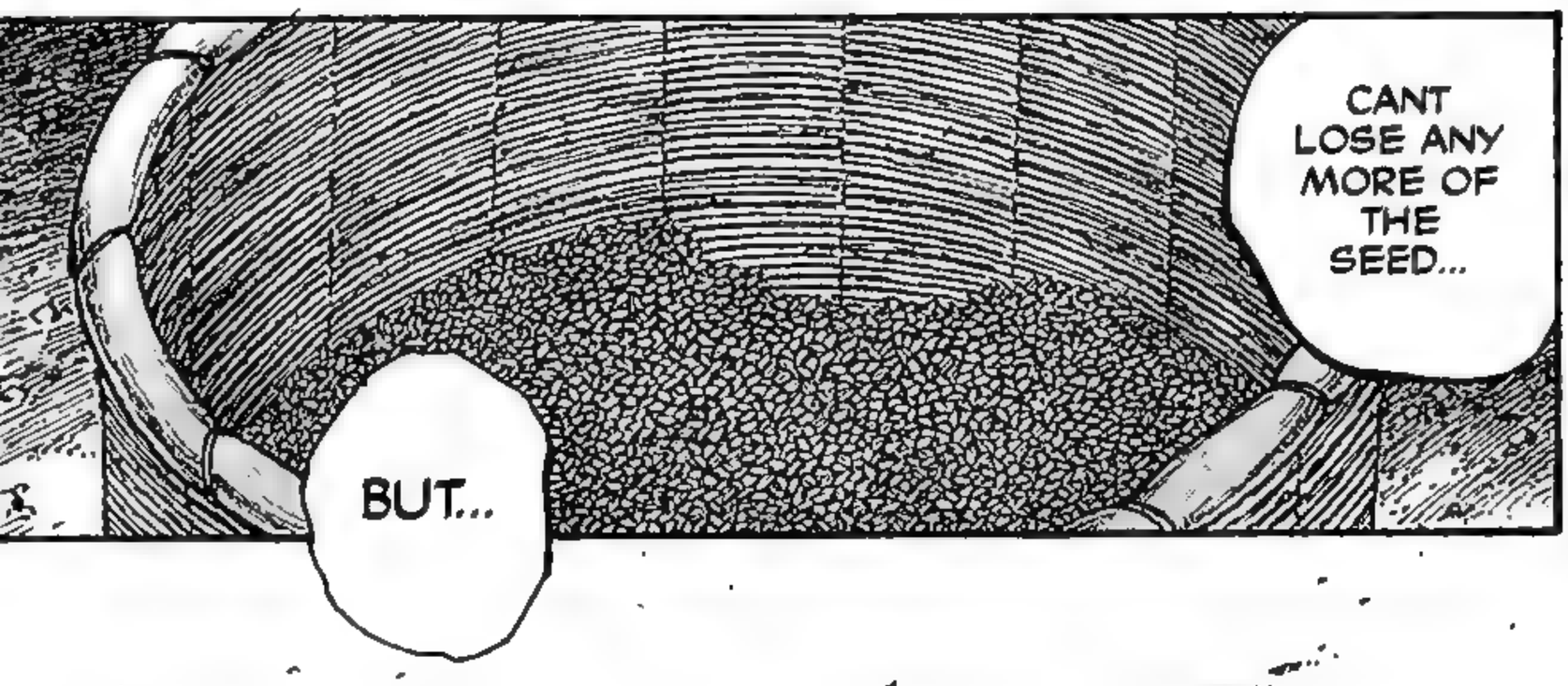




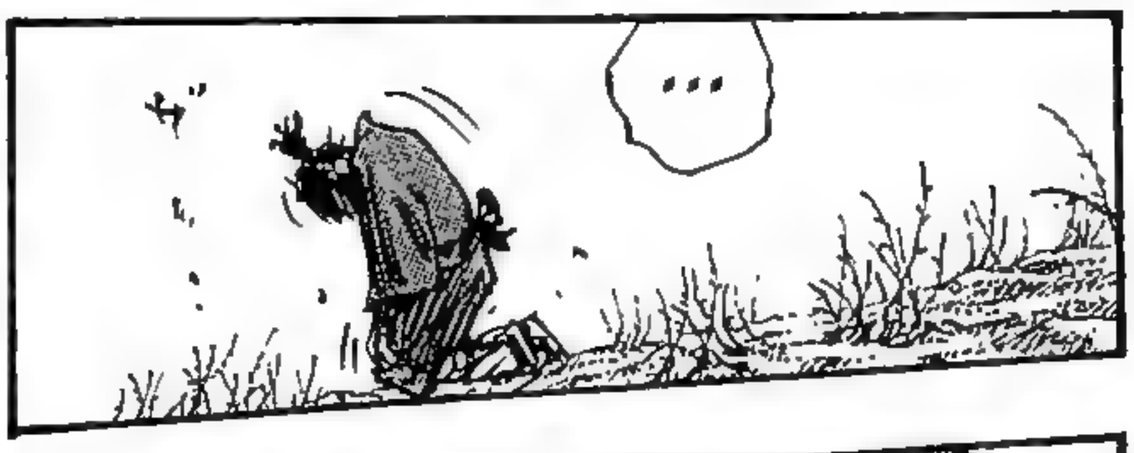
SHUSAKU, ARE YOU OK?

DID YOU HEAR?
MUSASHI'S GONE.

NO.
LET'S EAT JUST A LITTLE MORE OF THE SEED RICE.
OTHER-WISE, WE'LL ALL...
WE'VE ALREADY TAKEN TOO MUCH.


CANT LOSE ANY MORE OF THE SEED...
BUT...

WE HAVE TO GET PAST TODAY, BEFORE WE THINK ABOUT IT...
...THE FU-TURE.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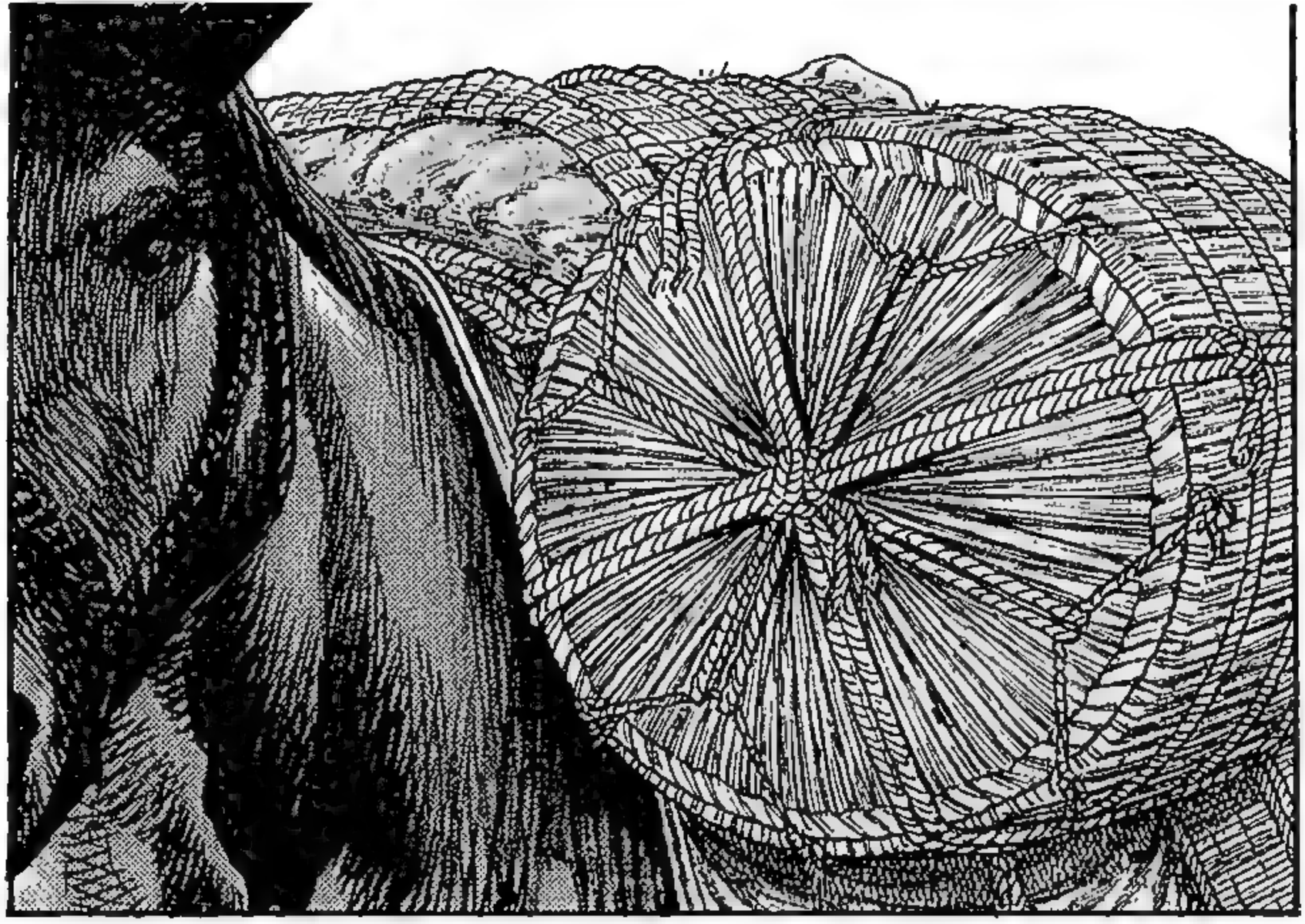
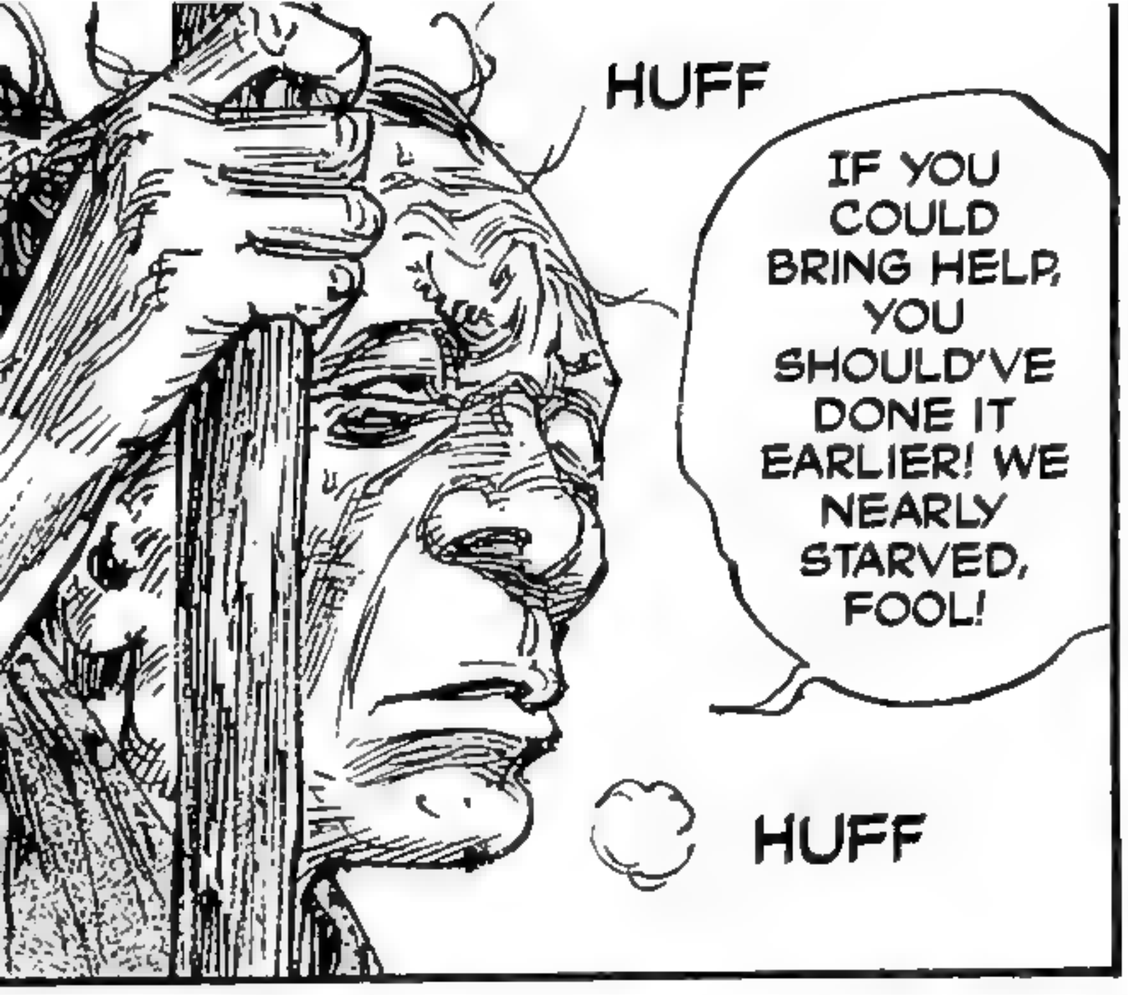


HEY!
EVERYONE!

HEY...

FOOD!
WE HAVE FOOD!!

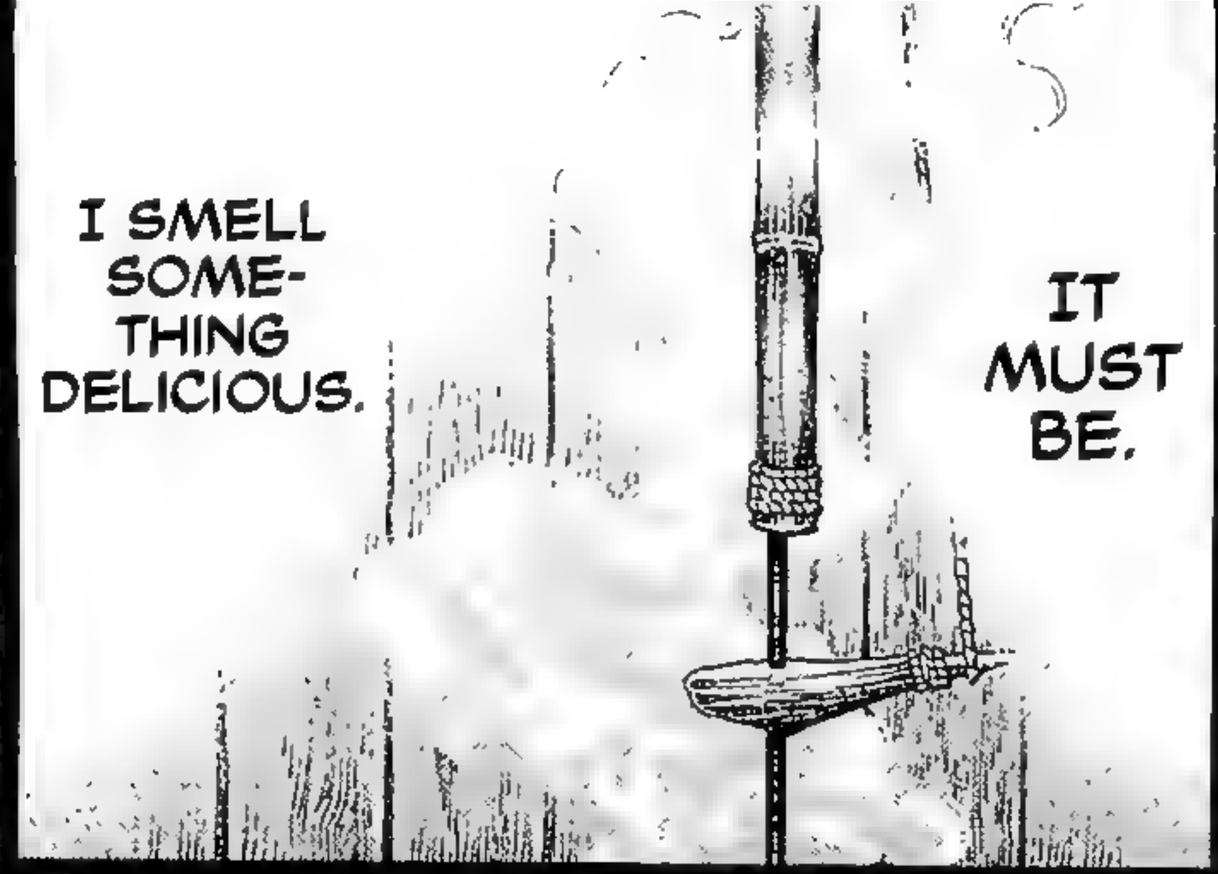

HUFF
IF YOU COULD BRING HELP, YOU SHOULD'VE DONE IT EARLIER! WE NEARLY STARVED, FOOL!
HUFF

HUFF
HUFF

HUFF

WE'RE SAVED...

IOR!!!

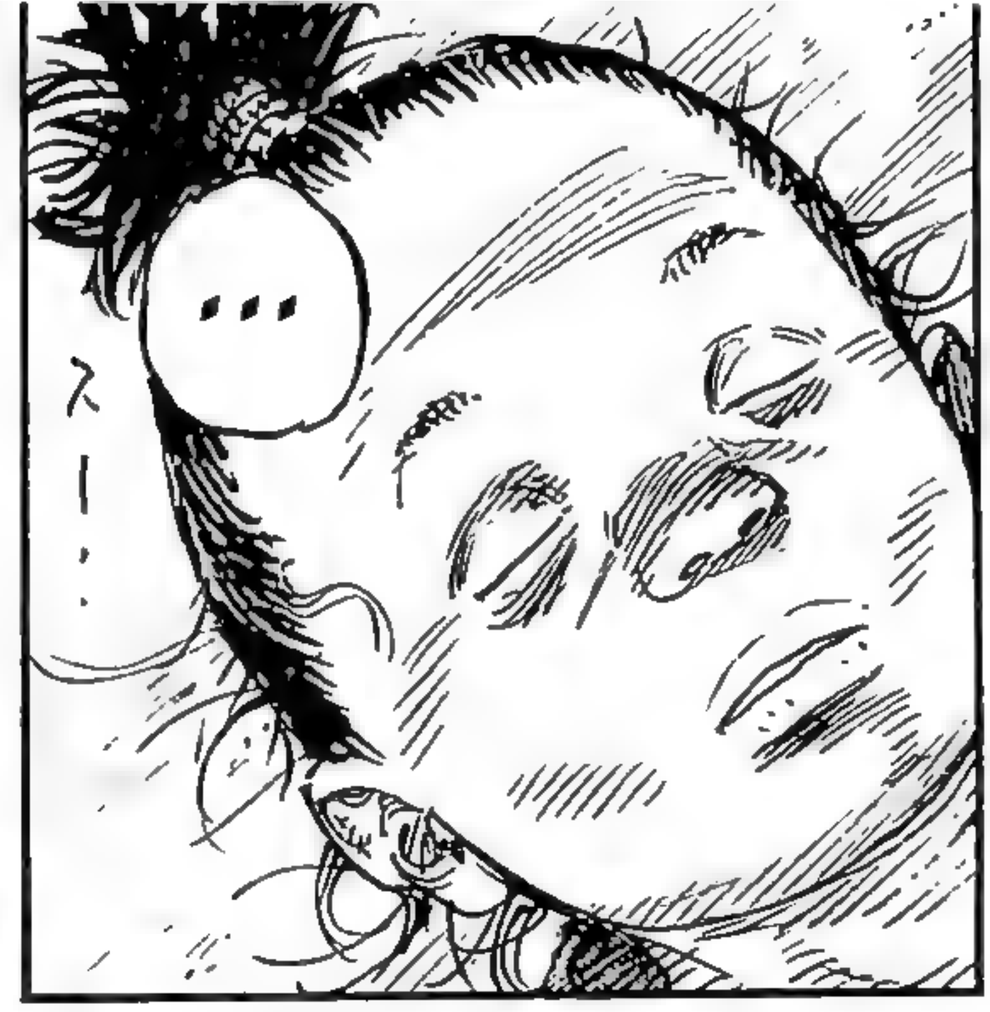

I SMELL SOME-THING DELICIOUS.
IT MUST BE.

IS THIS A DREAM?

YUP, IT'S A DREAM...

SEE OVER THERE?

THAT'S MY SENSEI.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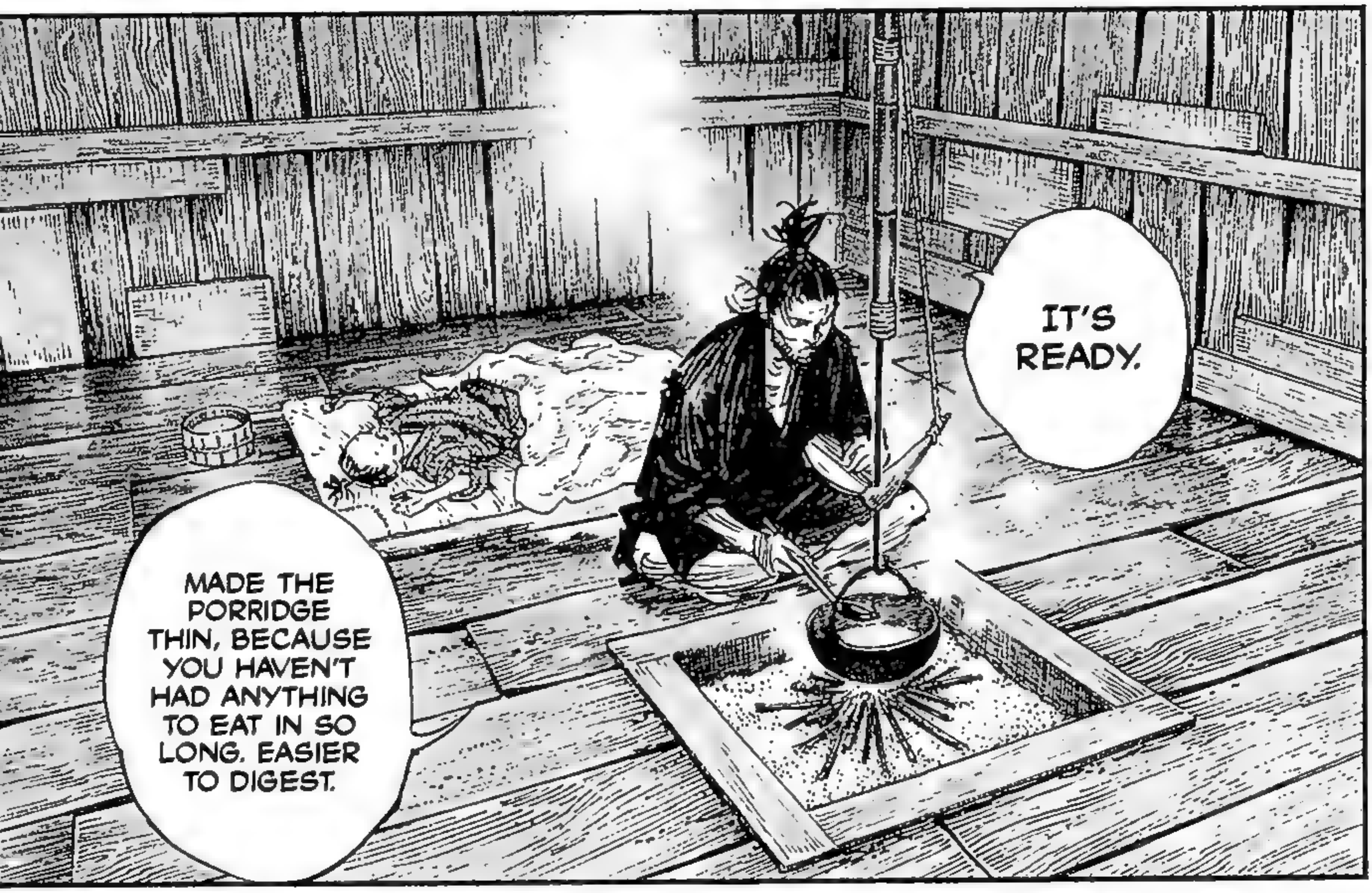
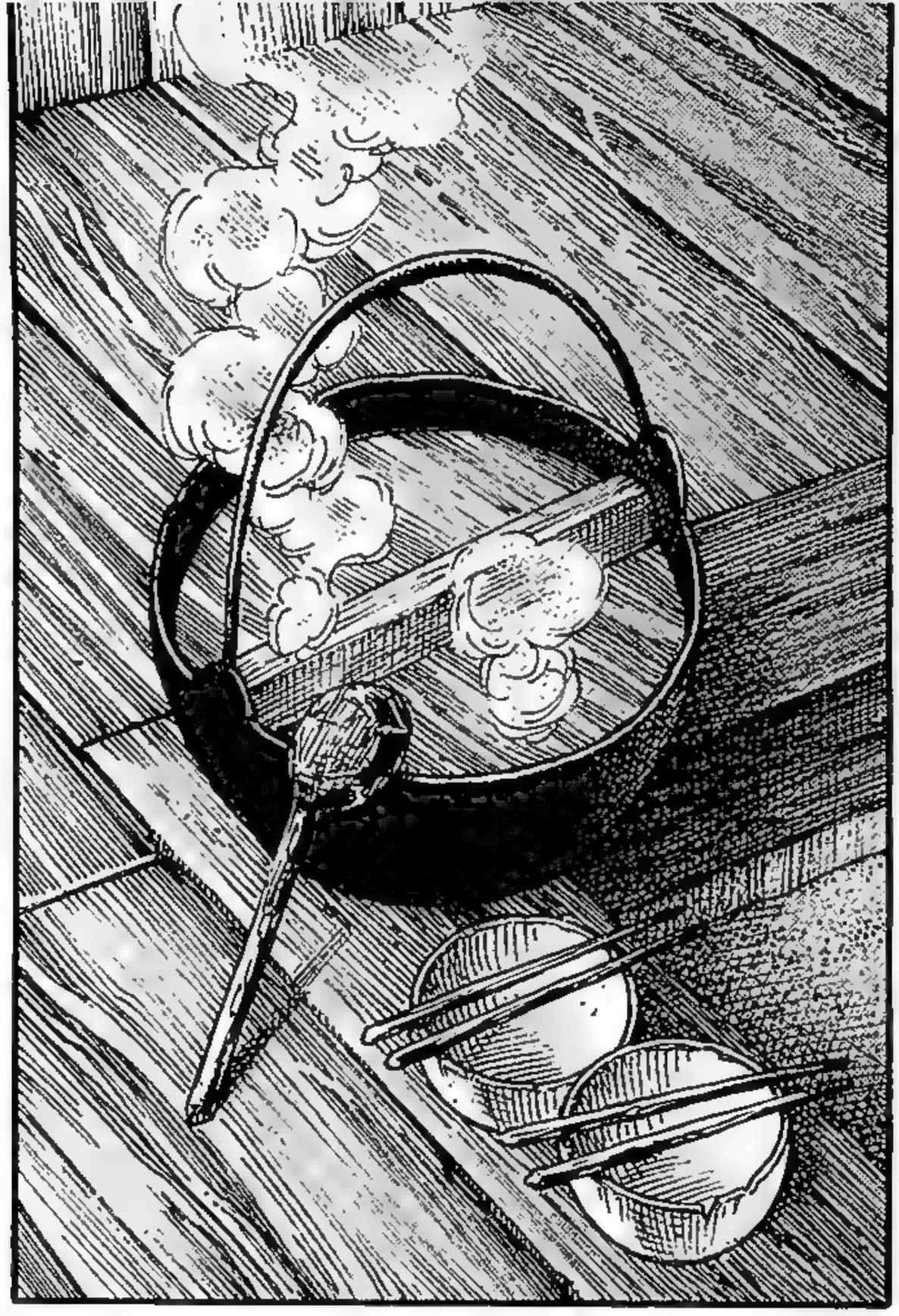

IT'S READY.
MADE THE PORRIDGE THIN, BECAUSE YOU HAVEN'T HAD ANYTHING TO EAT IN SO LONG. EASIER TO DIGEST.

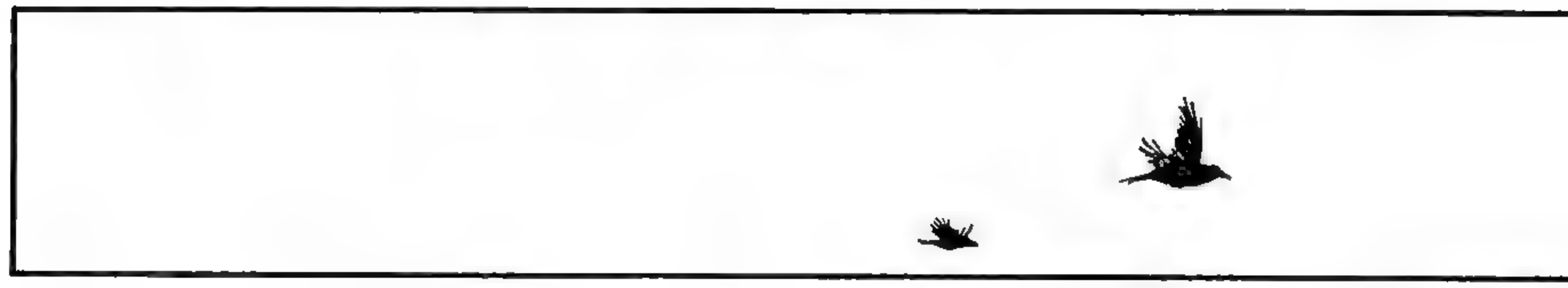
...

LET'S SEE...
SLURP

HOT...
じーん



HE'LL BE SO SURPRISED WHEN HE WAKES UP.
GRRL
HA HA...



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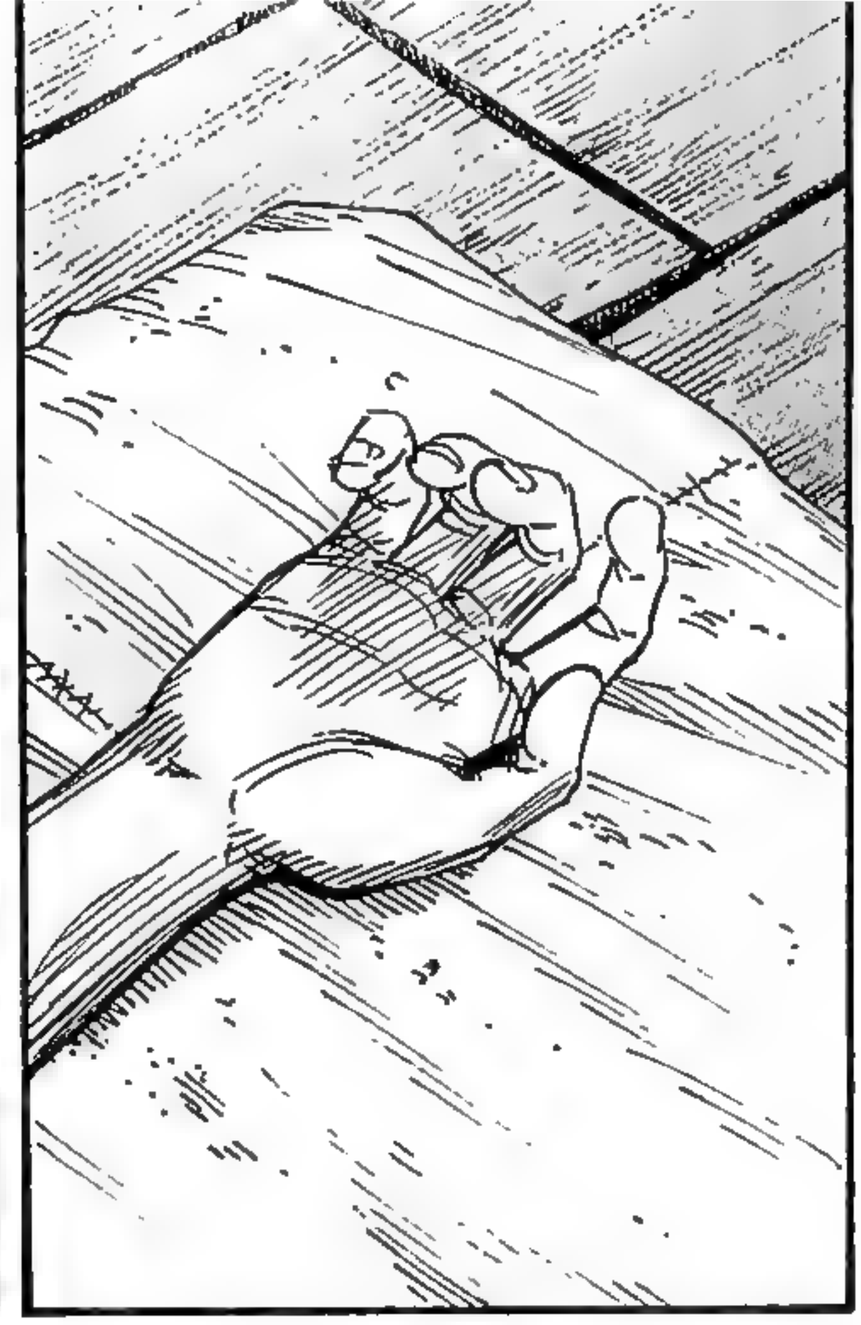
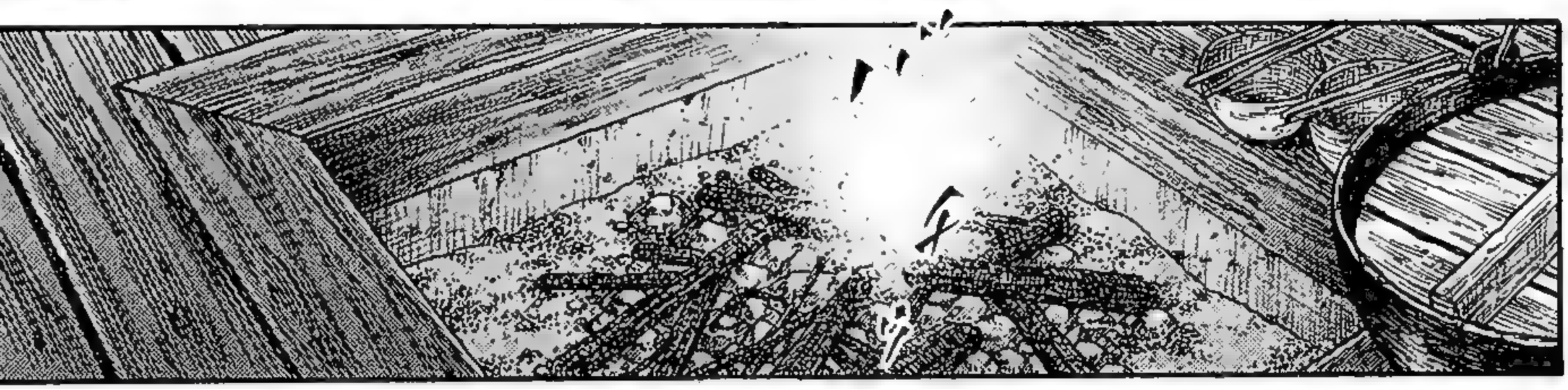
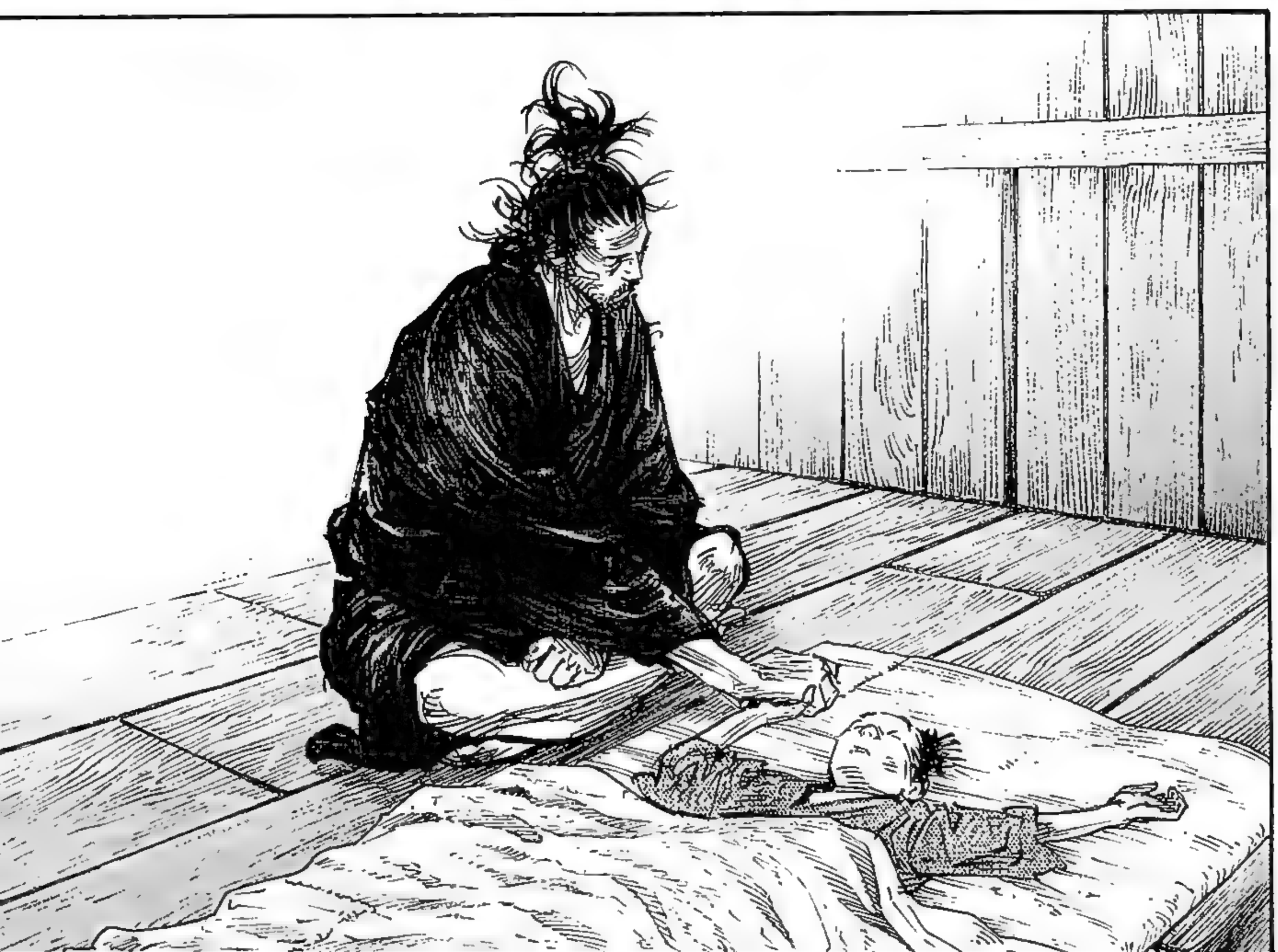






SO SMALL...

WE'RE SAVED, IORI...

?
MAY I SPEND THE NIGHT HERE?
!
EXCUSE ME...

HUH?
NOT MUCH SPACE HERE.

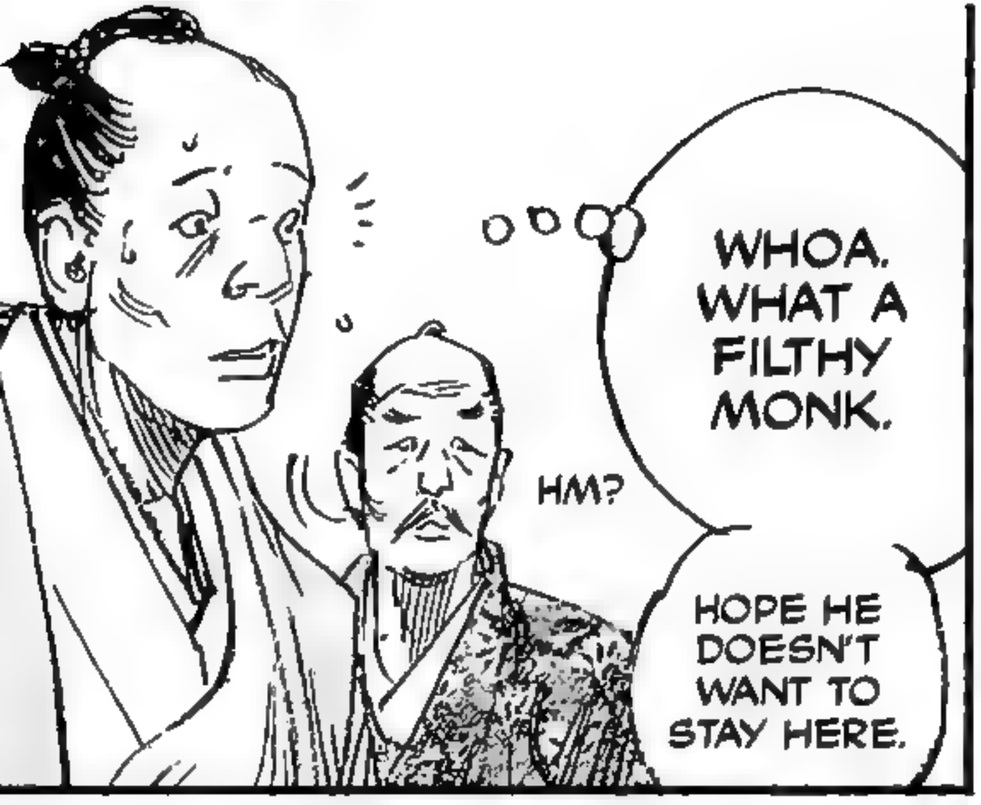
MUSASHI, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I KNOW IN THIS VILLAGE...

YOU...
YOU'RE MOVING IN?!

"EVEN-TUALLY" ...?

EVENTUALLY, I'LL SEND FOR MY THINGS...

DON'T FORGET THE PROMISE YOU MADE YESTERDAY.


WHOA. WHAT A FILTHY MONK.
HM?
HOPE HE DOESN'T WANT TO STAY HERE.

...

I NEED TO WASH UP.
WOULD IT BE POSSIBLE FOR ME TO BATHE HERE?

HE CAN STAY IN MY ROOM.

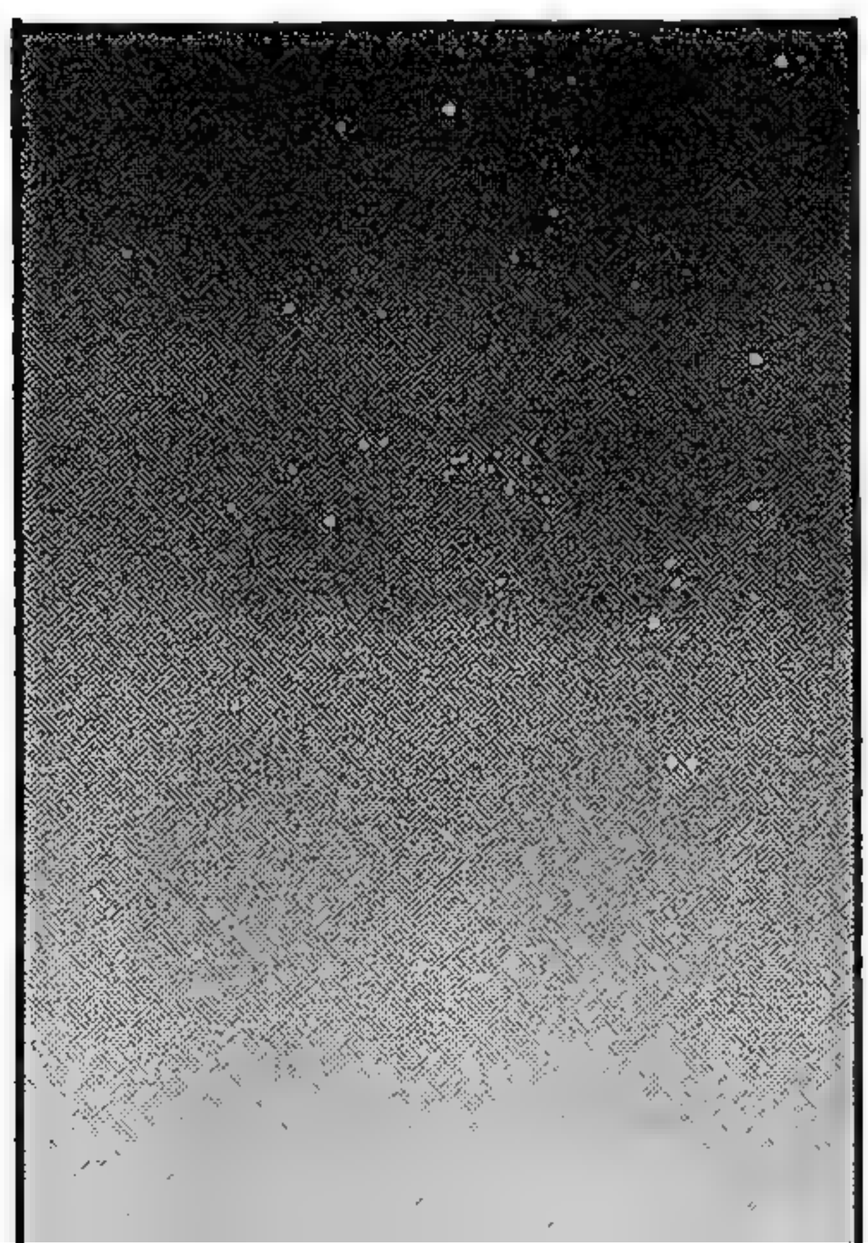
WE'RE ACTUALLY ...

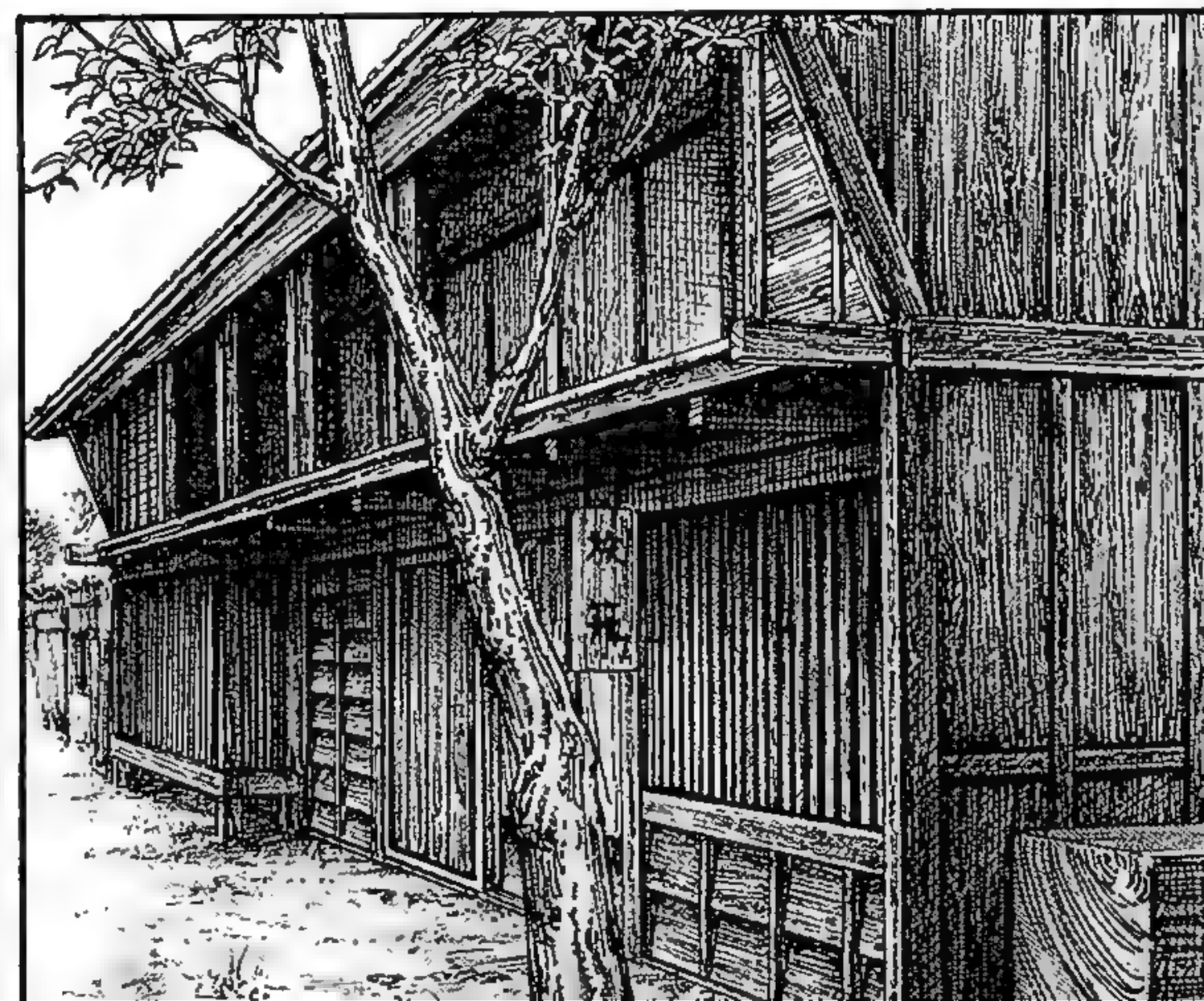
IF IT'S NOT TOO MUCH TROUBLE.
PERHAPS I COULD SPEND THE NIGHT...

ECCENTRIC TAKUAN!

SADO!

GO WASH UP.
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU SO FILTHY.
HA HA
YOU MEAN "EXCEL-LENT," RIGHT!
WHAT'S THIS ABOUT BEING "ECCEN-TRIC"!



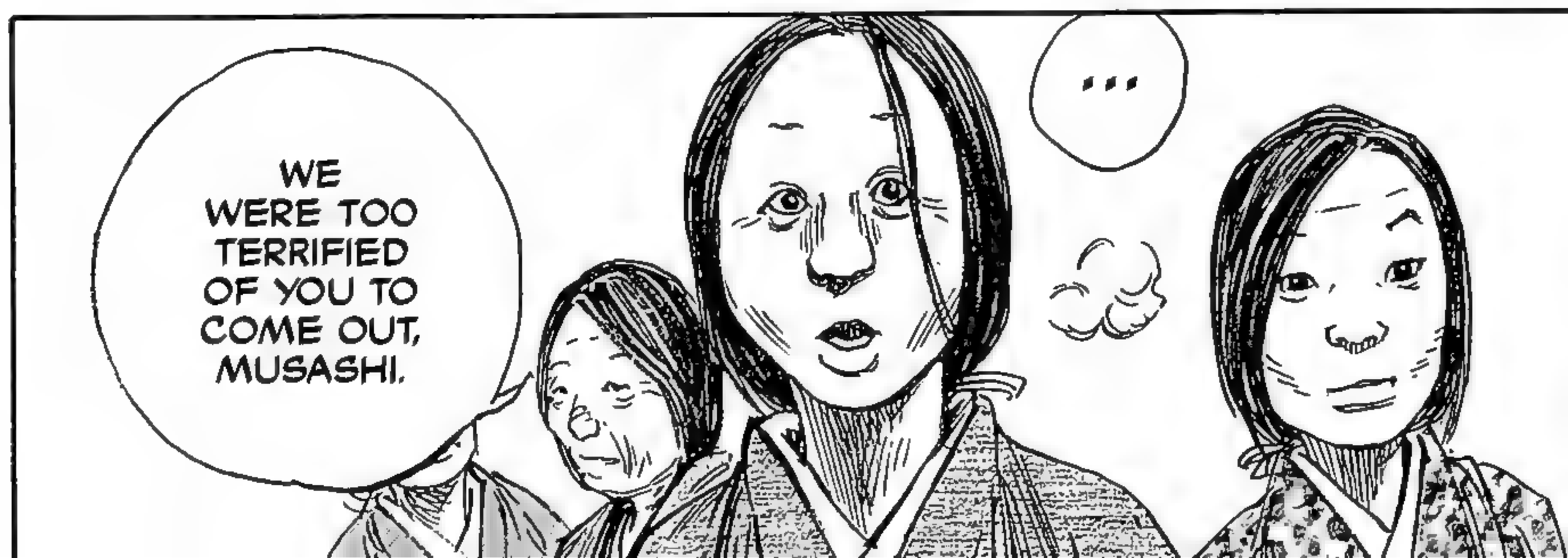


WHAT?!

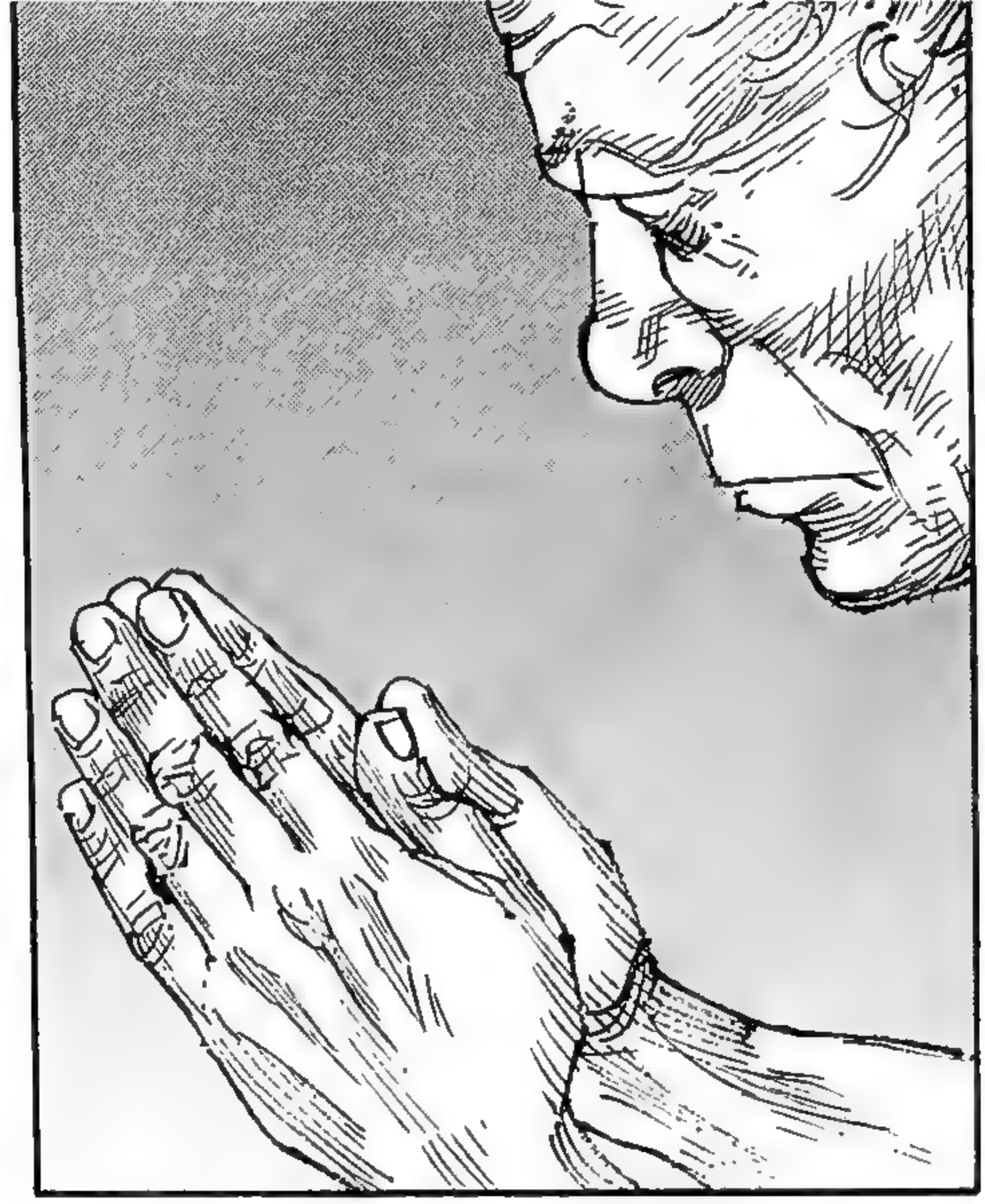
THAT UNUSUAL FOR HIM?
YOU'RE SAYING HE WAS ON HIS KNEES?
HA HA!
MAYBE IT WASN'T HIM?

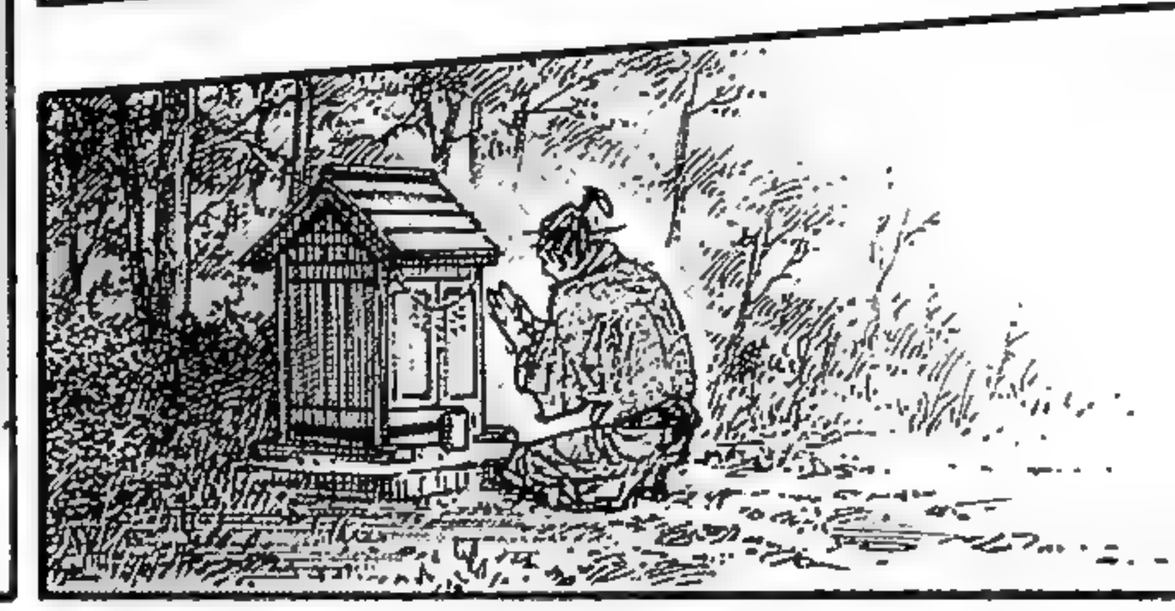
BUT YOU'RE STILL ALIVE...

HM?



ME NEITHER.
ME NEITHER.
I'VE NEVER SEEN YOU SMILE UNTIL NOW.
LET ME SEE
WELL, I'VE NEVER SEEN HIM AT ALL.
HA HA HA...
HA HA HA...





HUH?
GUESS SO.
IT'S TIME TO PREPARE THE PADDIES, ISN'T IT?
THE SEEDS ...

SHUSAKU...

!
PLEASE TEACH US.

EVEN IF YOUR FATE'S ALREADY SET.

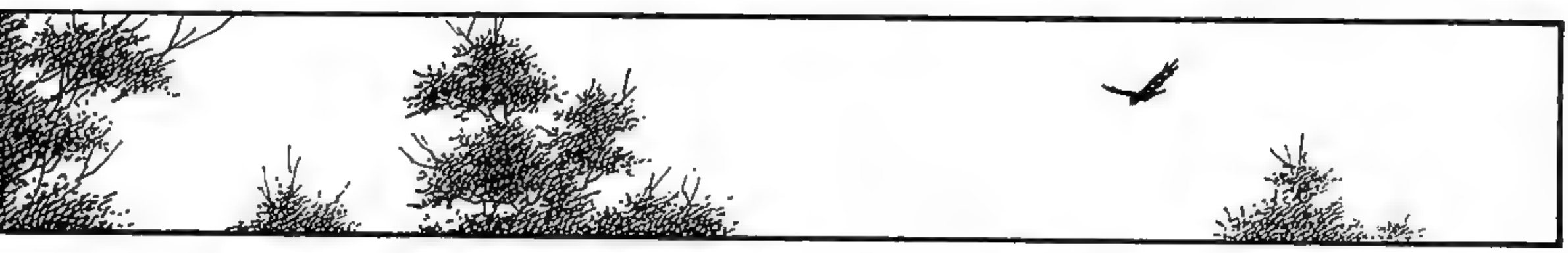
DO IT BY YOUR OWN HAND OR NOTHING CHANGES.

THIS IS A FIRST! FOR YOU GUYS TO..

THIS...

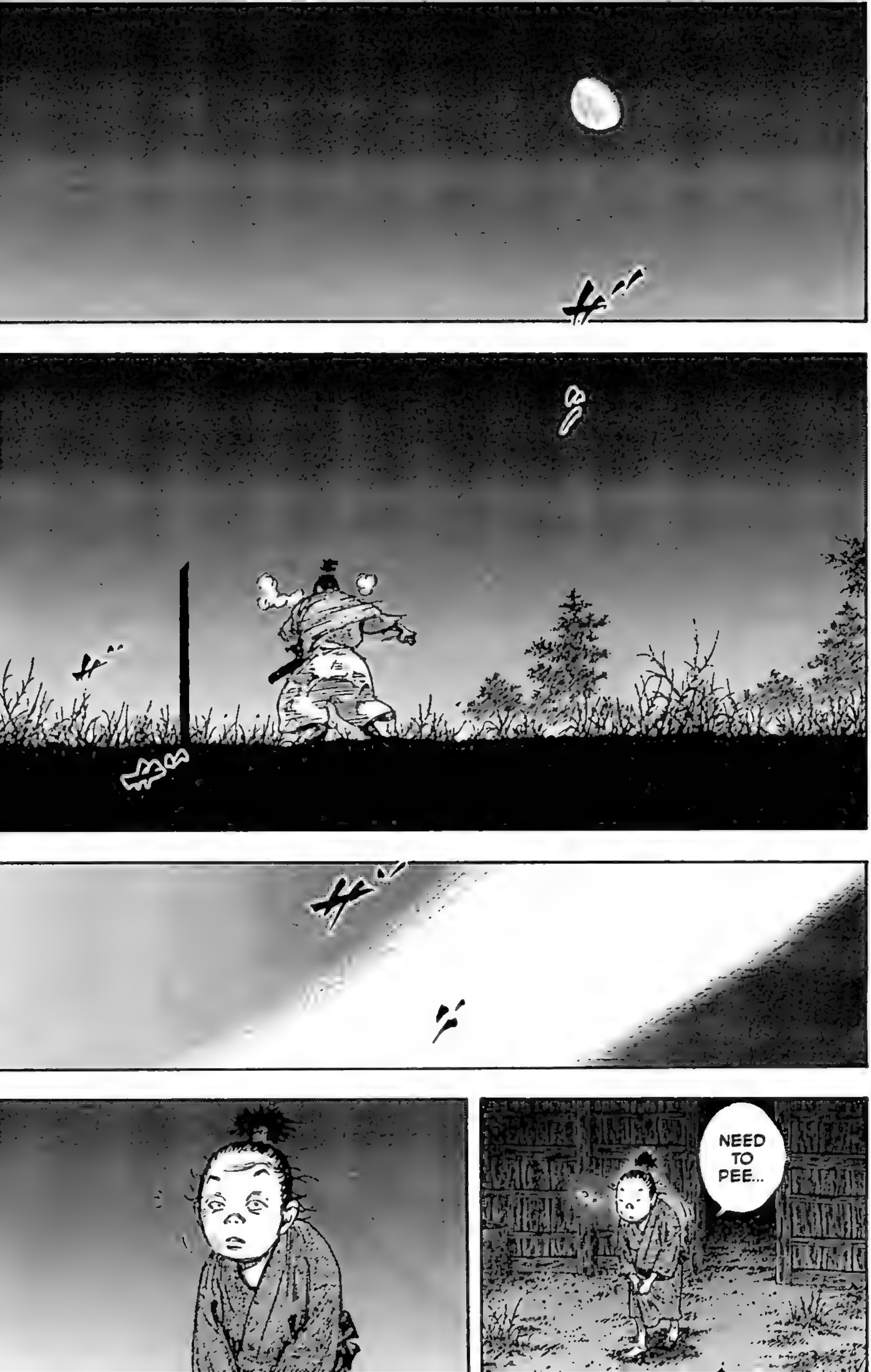
THAT'S WHAT I LEARNED WATCHING MUSASHI.

...YOU CAN STILL TRY TO CHANGE SOMETHI NG ON YOUR OWN.



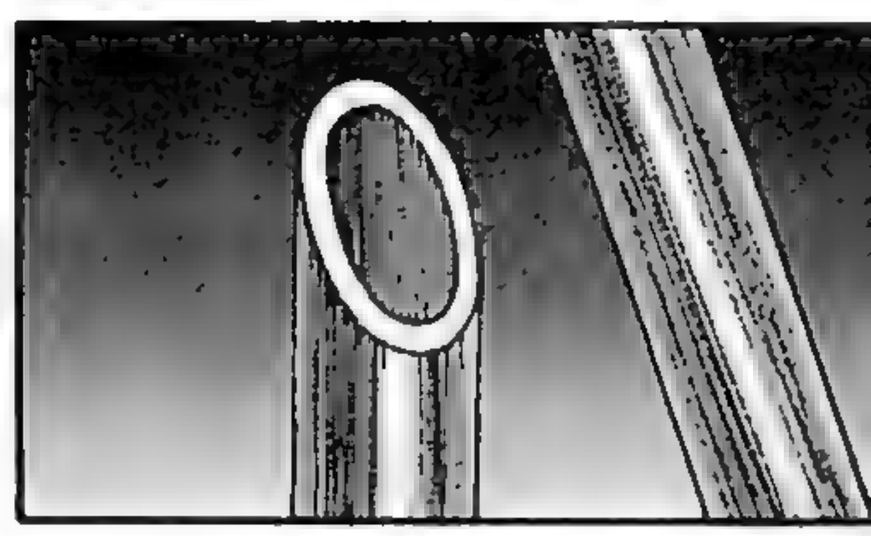
COME ON THEN...
DON'T WASTE TIME...
LET'S GET GOING.

SPRINGS JUST AROUND THE CORNER.

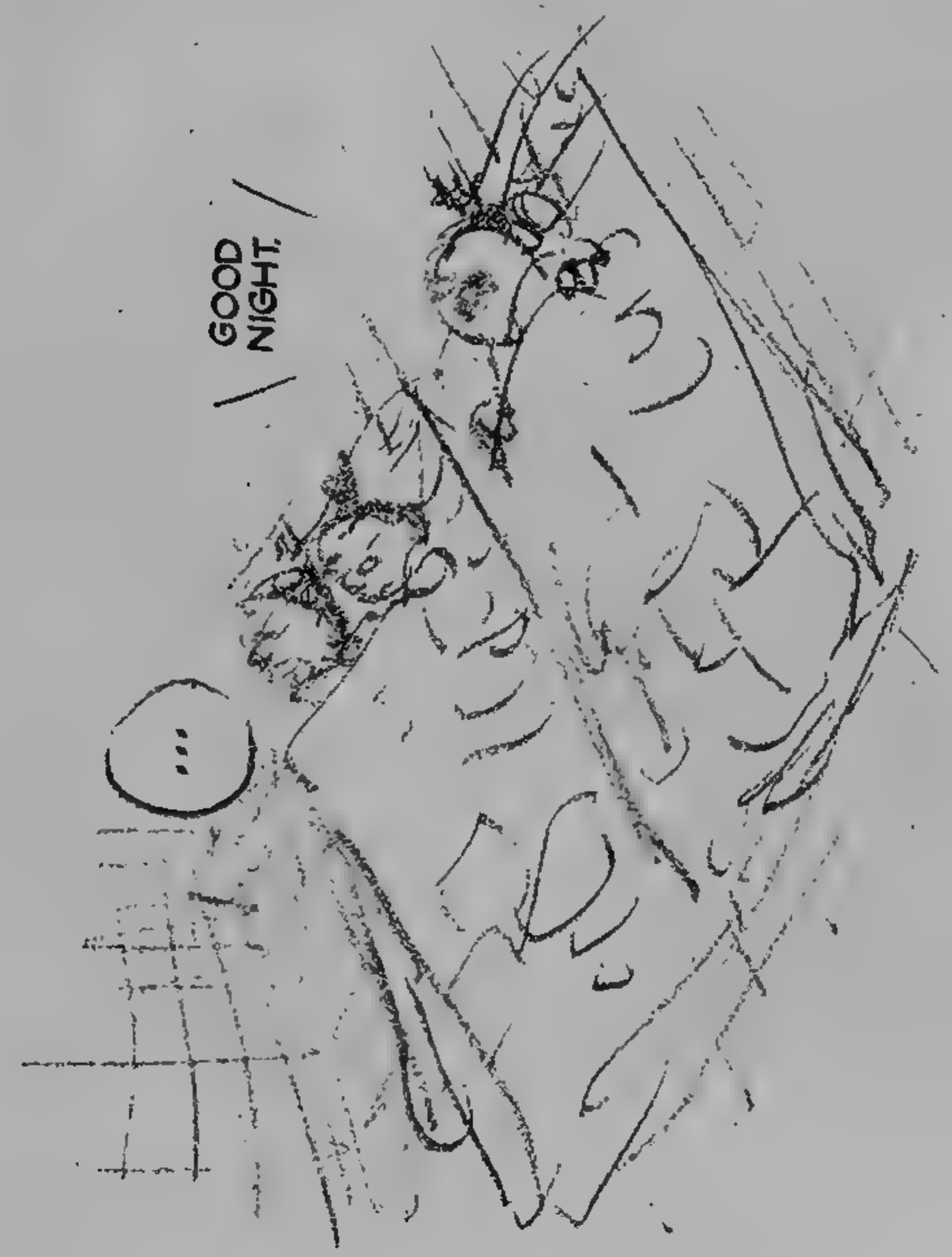

NEED TO PEE...

MUSASHI...

!



I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN THE HUMILIATION OF DEFEAT.
HUFF
HUFF


GOOD NIGHT.
...

...
WON'T YOU HAVE A TRAINING SESSION WITH ME?
MUSASHI...

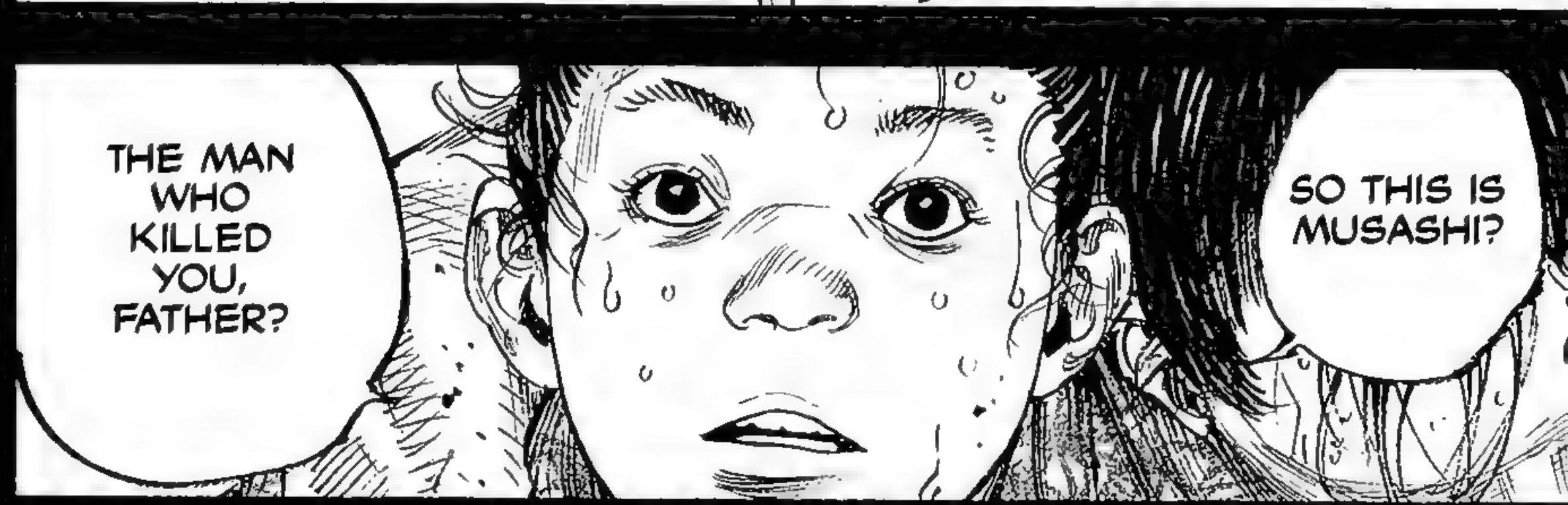
OOF!

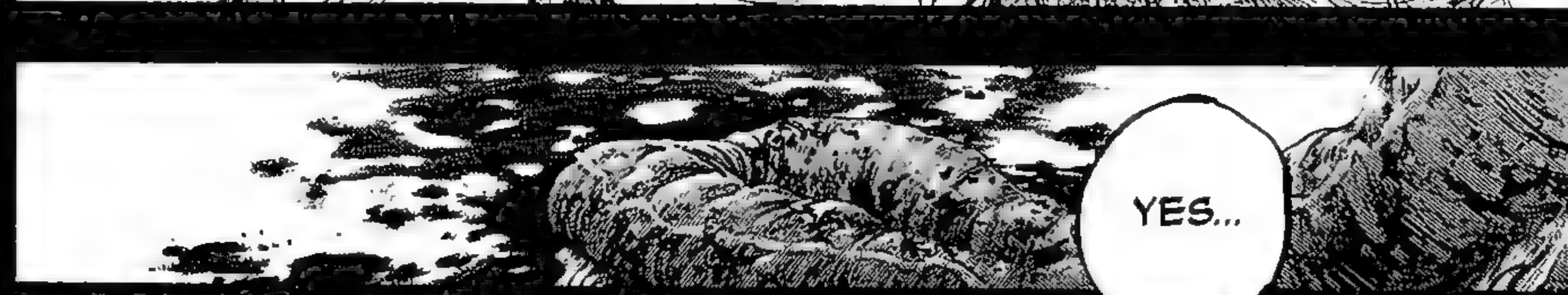
MY LEGS STILL HURT... SORRY.

?!

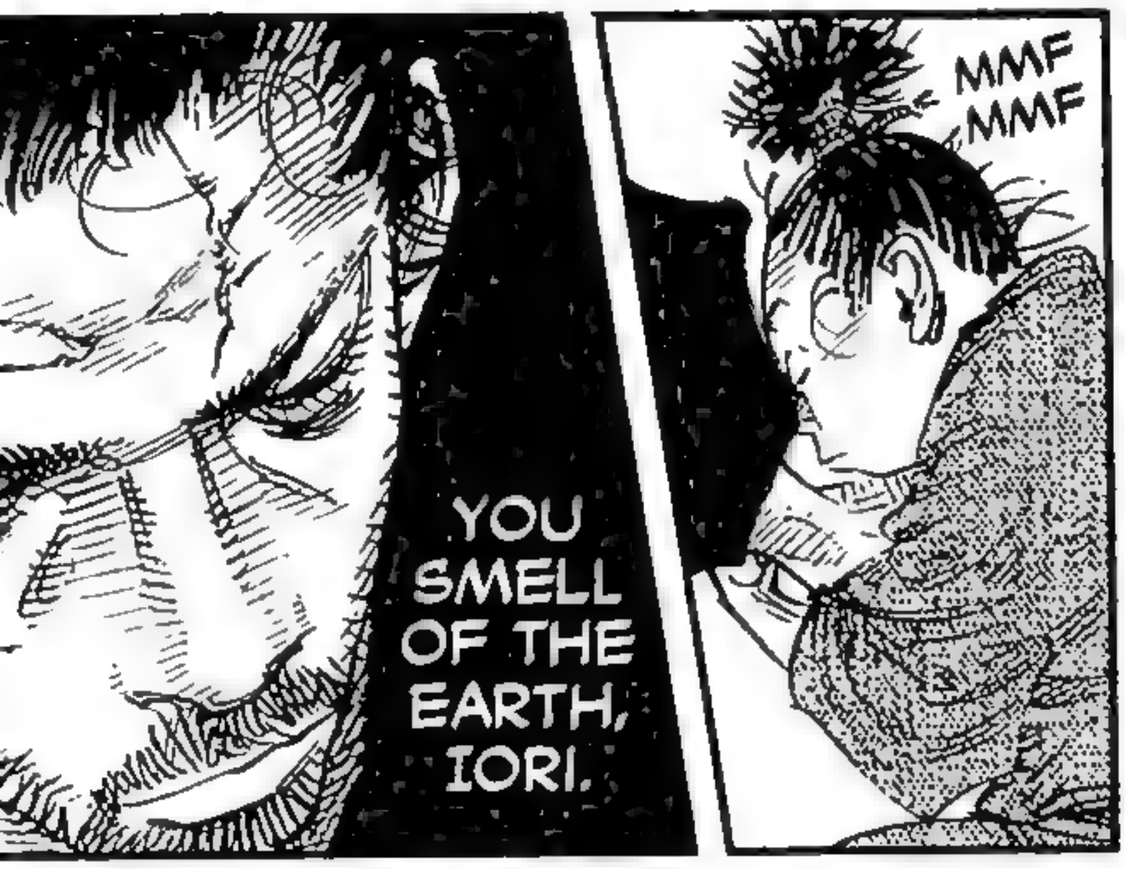
THE WIND'S CALMED.

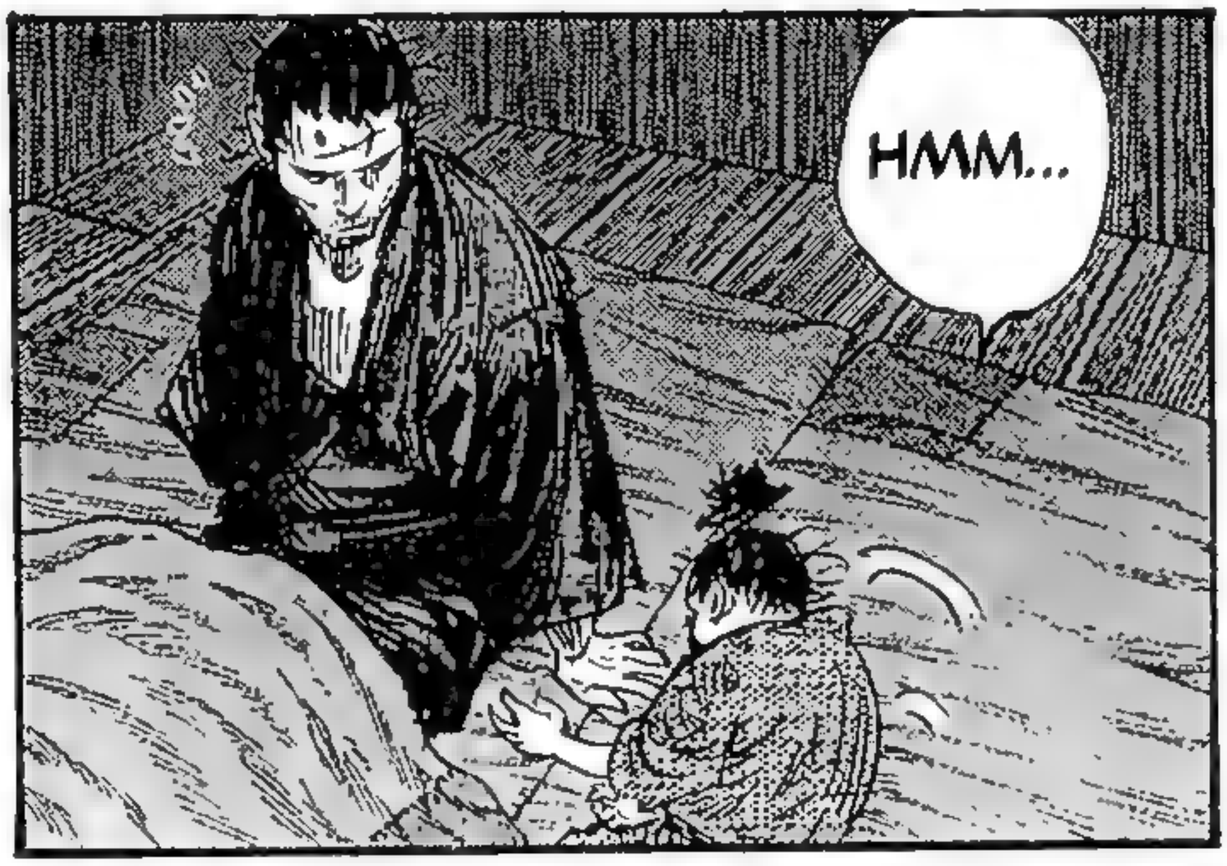
#317 | Pure and Clean

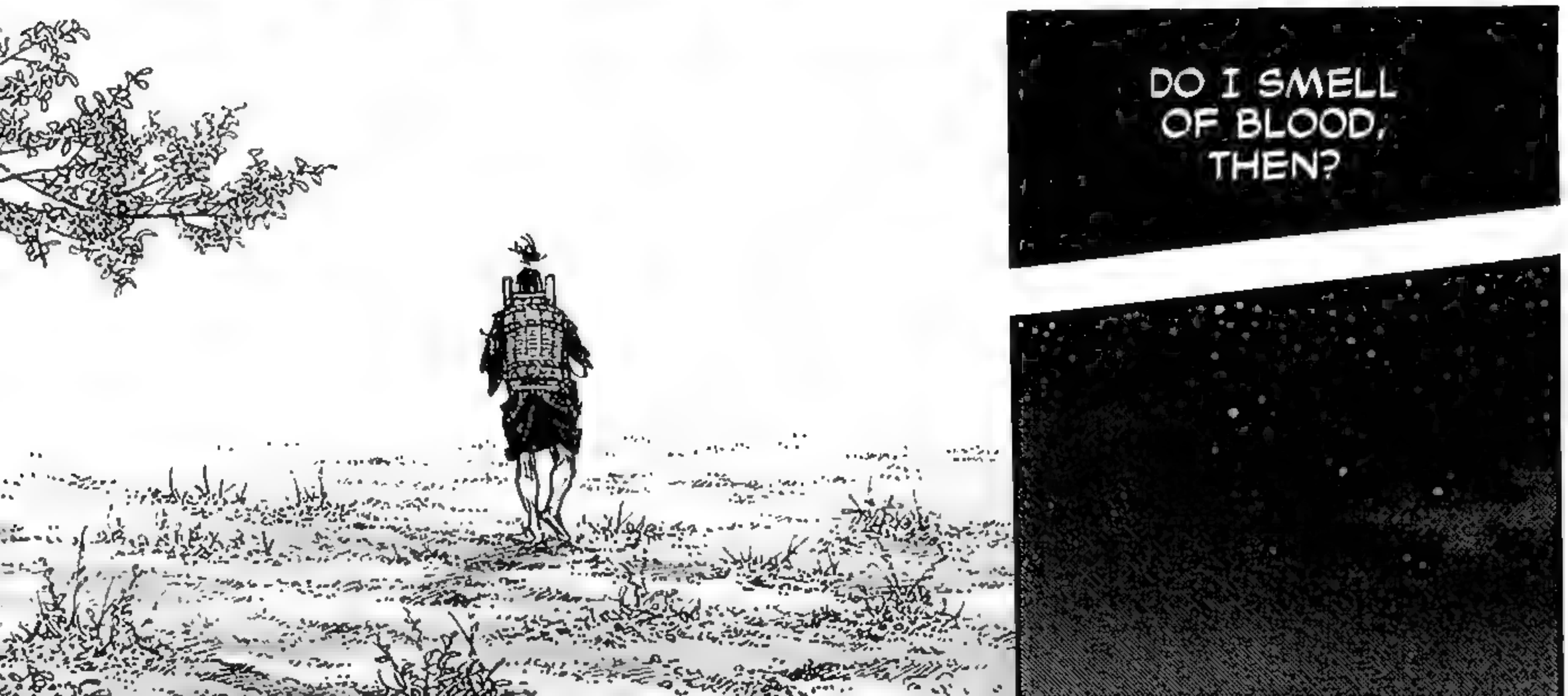

THE MAN WHO KILLED YOU, FATHER?
SO THIS IS MUSASHI?


YES...

THAT'S HIM.


YOU SMELL OF THE EARTH, IORI.
MMF MMF


HMM...


DO I SMELL OF BLOOD, THEN?

PLEASE TEACH US HOW TO FIGHT.

MUSASHI...

HUH?

TOMI LOST HER HUSBAND.

THINGS AREN'T EASY, BUT...

YOU DO PLAN ON STAYING, RIGHT?

FOR...A WHILE MORE.

WHAT-?

...WE WANT TO BE STRONG.

THIS IS TOYO-ZAEMON SENSEI.
HE'S STRONG.

WHAT'S WRONG?
HE'S A RESPECTABLE MEMBER OF THE KOKURA CLAN.

...

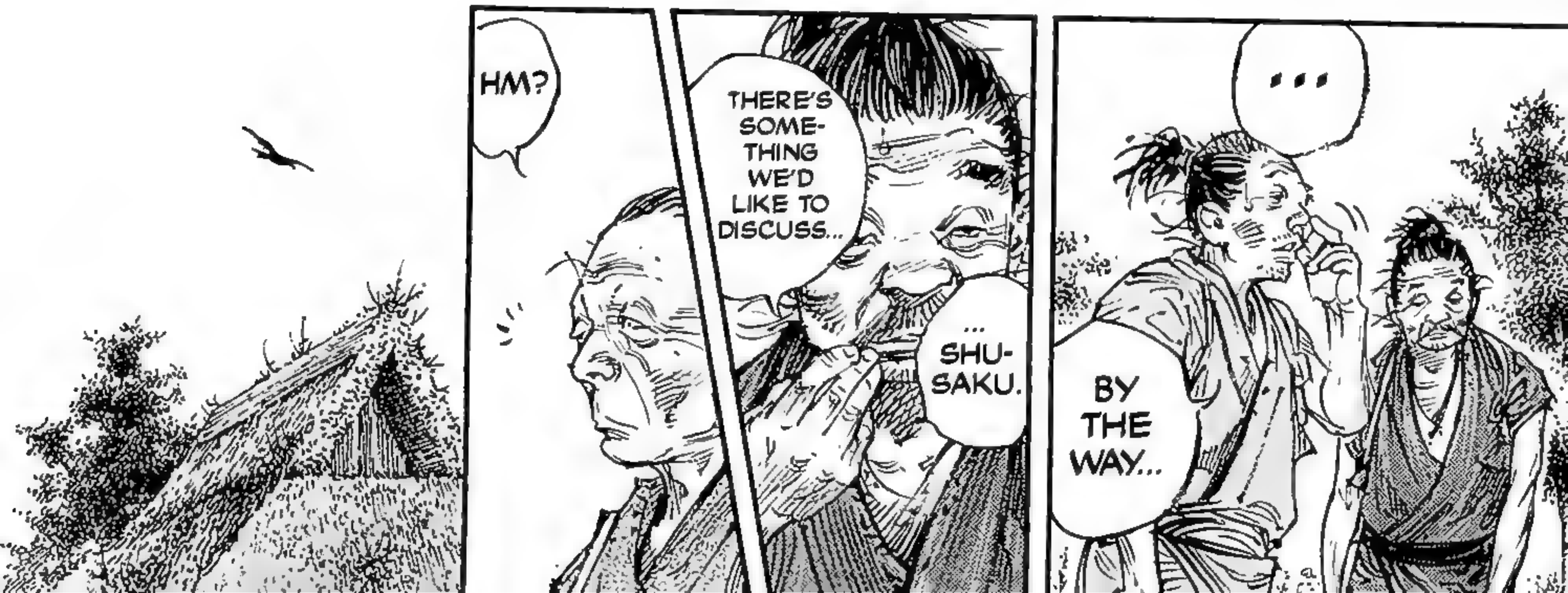
...
ARE THEY SHY?
HUH?

...

THIS IS A MESS!
CANT YOU SEE WHAT I'M DOING?!
SORRY.

NO, NOT LIKE THAT!

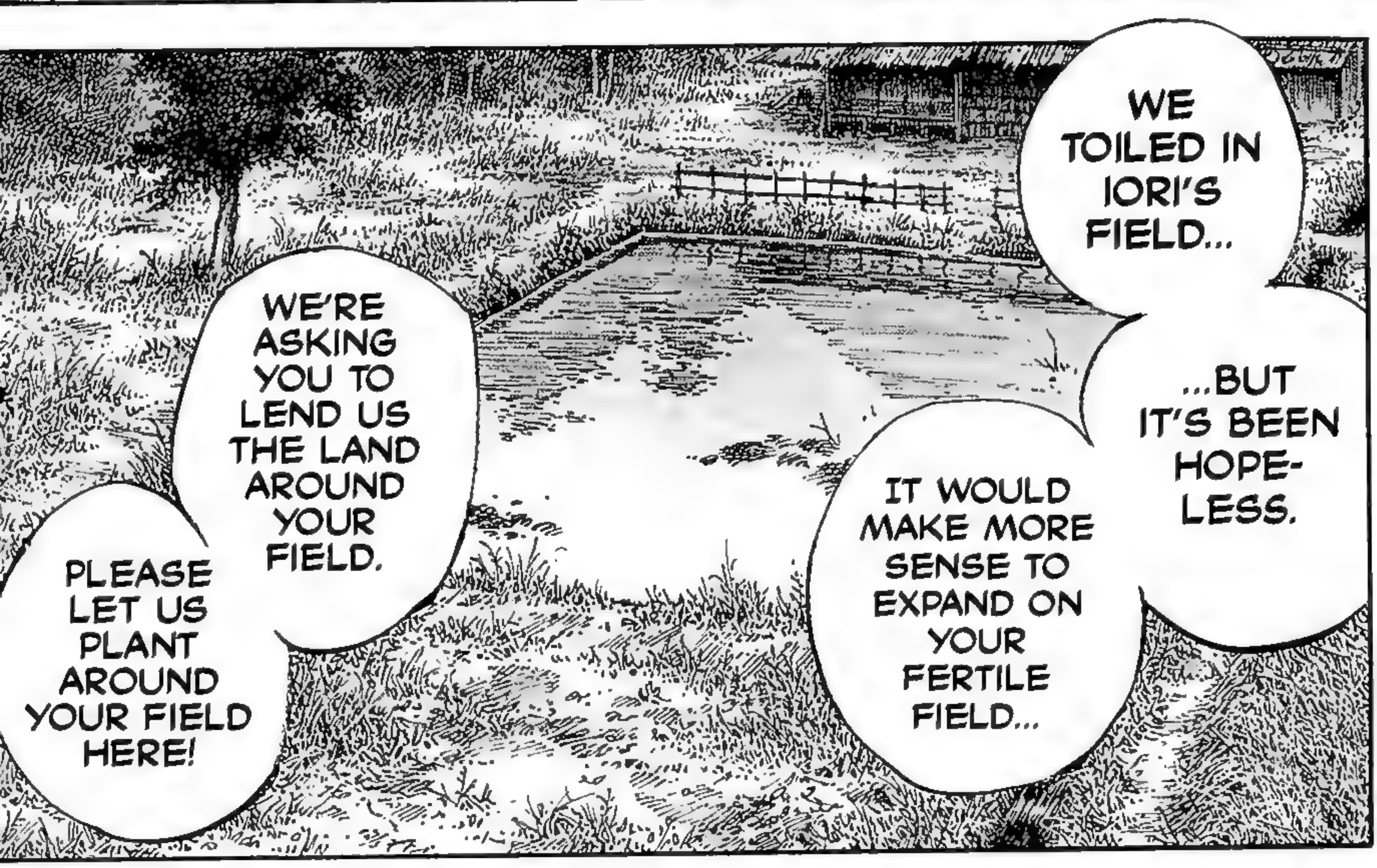
HUFF
I SHOULD NEVER HAVE AGREED TO DO THIS WITH YOU ALL.


HM?
THERE'S SOME-THING WE'D LIKE TO DISCUSS...
... SHU-SAKU.
...
BY THE WAY...

I'M SORRY, CAN YOU REPEAT THAT?
YOU'RE ASKING TO TAKE MY LAND...
...IS THAT IT?

WHAT?!

NO, WE JUST WANT TO BORROW IT.
WE'RE ASKING YOU TO LEND IT TO US.


WE TOILED IN IORI'S FIELD...
...BUT IT'S BEEN HOPE-LESS.
WE'RE ASKING YOU TO LEND US THE LAND AROUND YOUR FIELD.
IT WOULD MAKE MORE SENSE TO EXPAND ON YOUR FERTILE FIELD...
PLEASE LET US PLANT AROUND YOUR FIELD HERE!

...

BESIDES...

WHEN DID YOU GET SUCH NERVE?!

HA HA HA HA HA!!

WELL, I'LL SAY!!

!

HA HA HA HA

HA HA...

HA HA HA.

REALLY... THE NERVE OF YOU ALL!

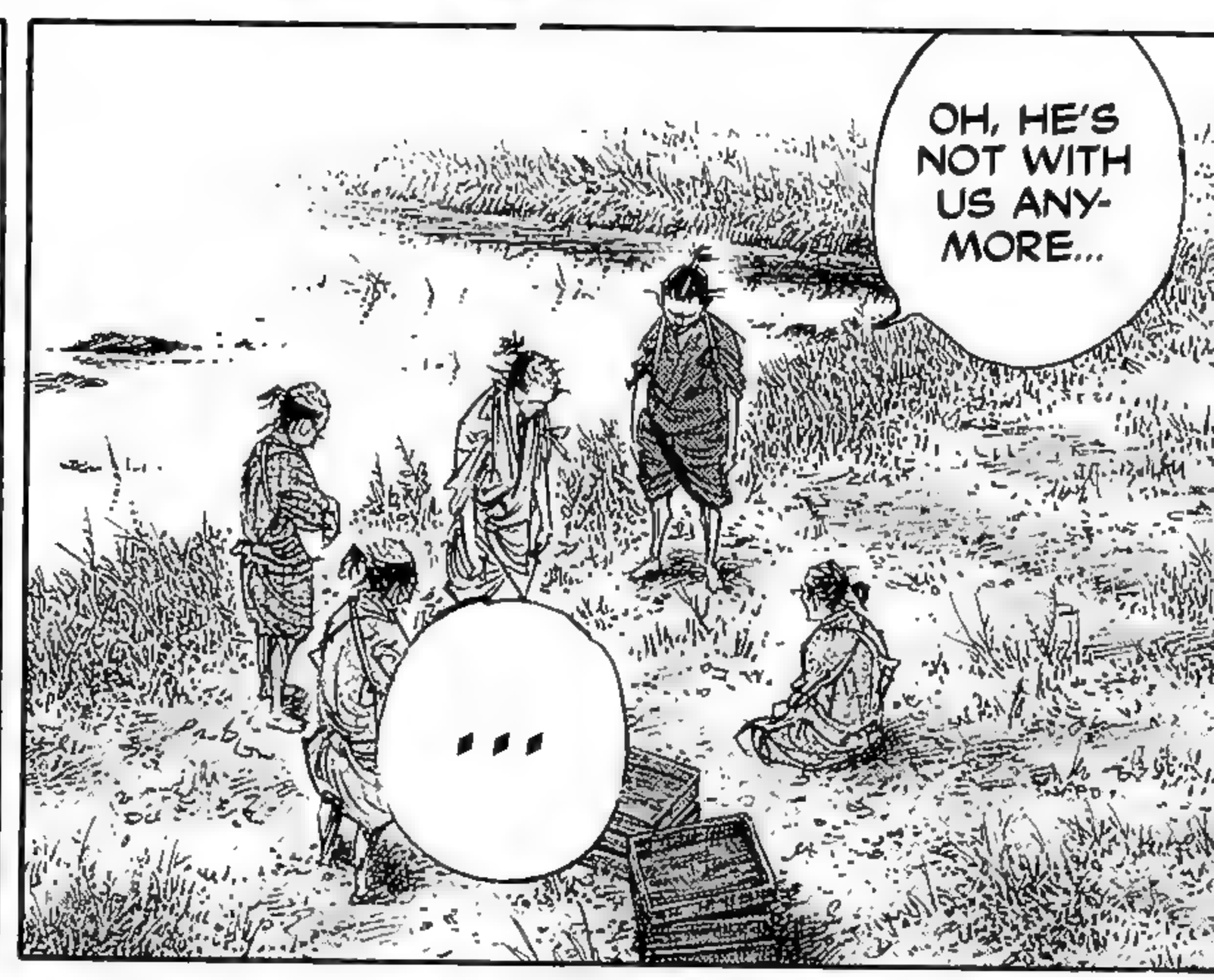
YOU FELLAS HAVE REALLY CHANGED.

RIGHT KISUKE-?

I'D SAY IT'S YOU WHO'S CHANGED, SHUSAKU...

...

...


OH, HE'S NOT WITH US ANY-MORE...
...

THE GROUND DOESN'T BELONG TO ANYONE.

WE'RE ALL JUST BORROWING FROM IT.

IT'S BEEN AROUND LONG BEFORE ANYONE SHOWED UP HERE.

GO AHEAD AND EXPAND THE FIELD.

YOU SCUM.

THE PROVISIONS THEY GAVE US WON'T LAST.

HMPH

THAT IS, IF YOU SURVIVE INTO THE NEXT YEAR.

SHUSAKU ...!!

I'LL SHOW YOU HOW TO DO IT.

ALL RIGHT THEN. LET'S PLANT THE SEEDS.

WAIT, SHUSAKU.

MUSASHI ISN'T EVEN HERE YET.

THAT'S RIGHT.

IT'S AS IF YOU'RE ONE OF THEM, MUSASHI.

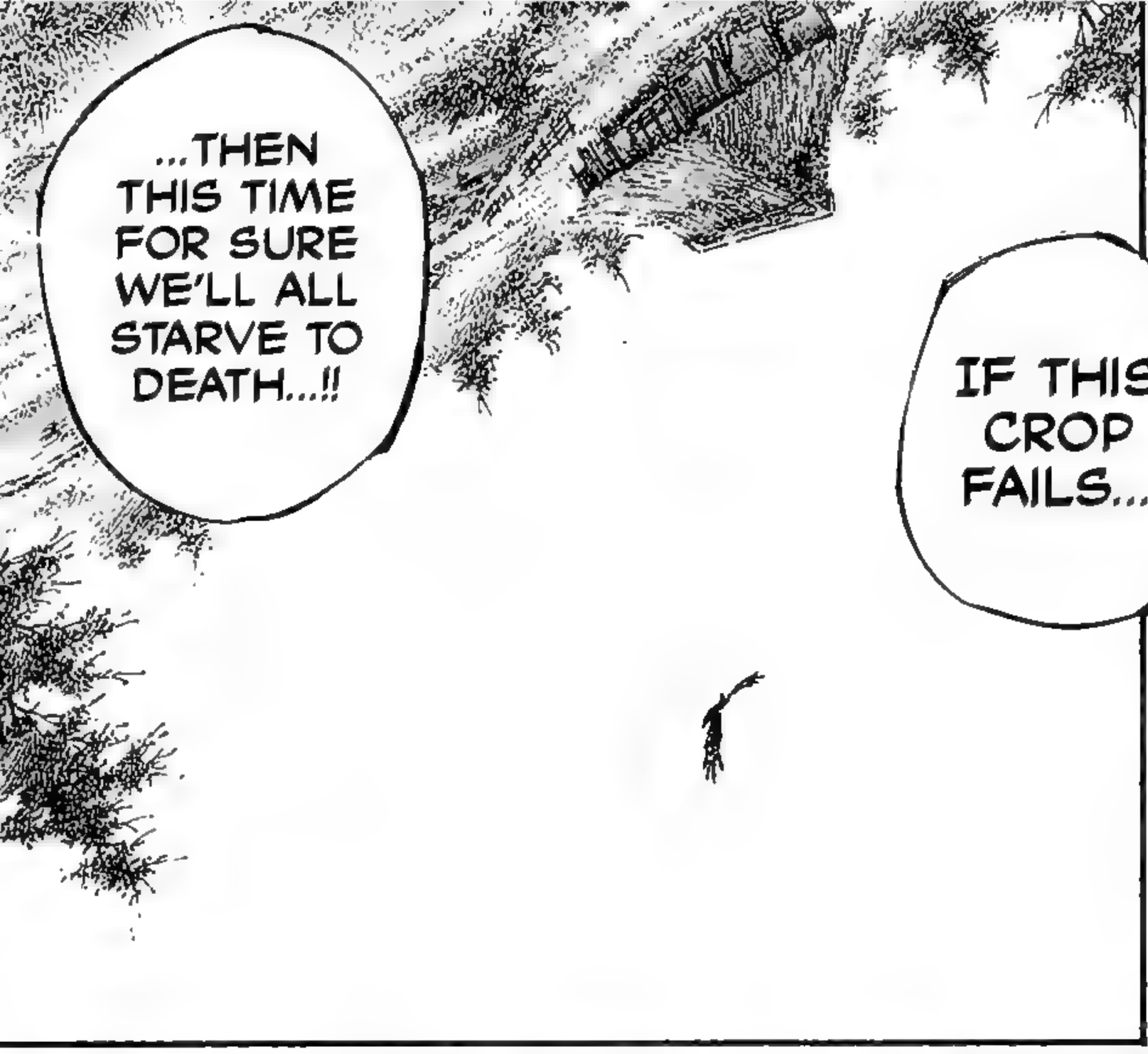
LISTEN UP...

WE CAN'T WASTE A SINGLE SEED.

...

OH, HERE HE COMES.

IF...

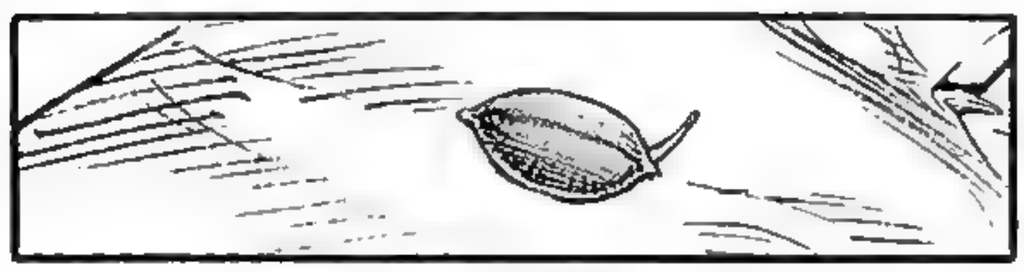

...THEN THIS TIME FOR SURE WE'LL ALL STARVE TO DEATH...!!
IF THIS CROP FAILS...

IF WE FAIL...

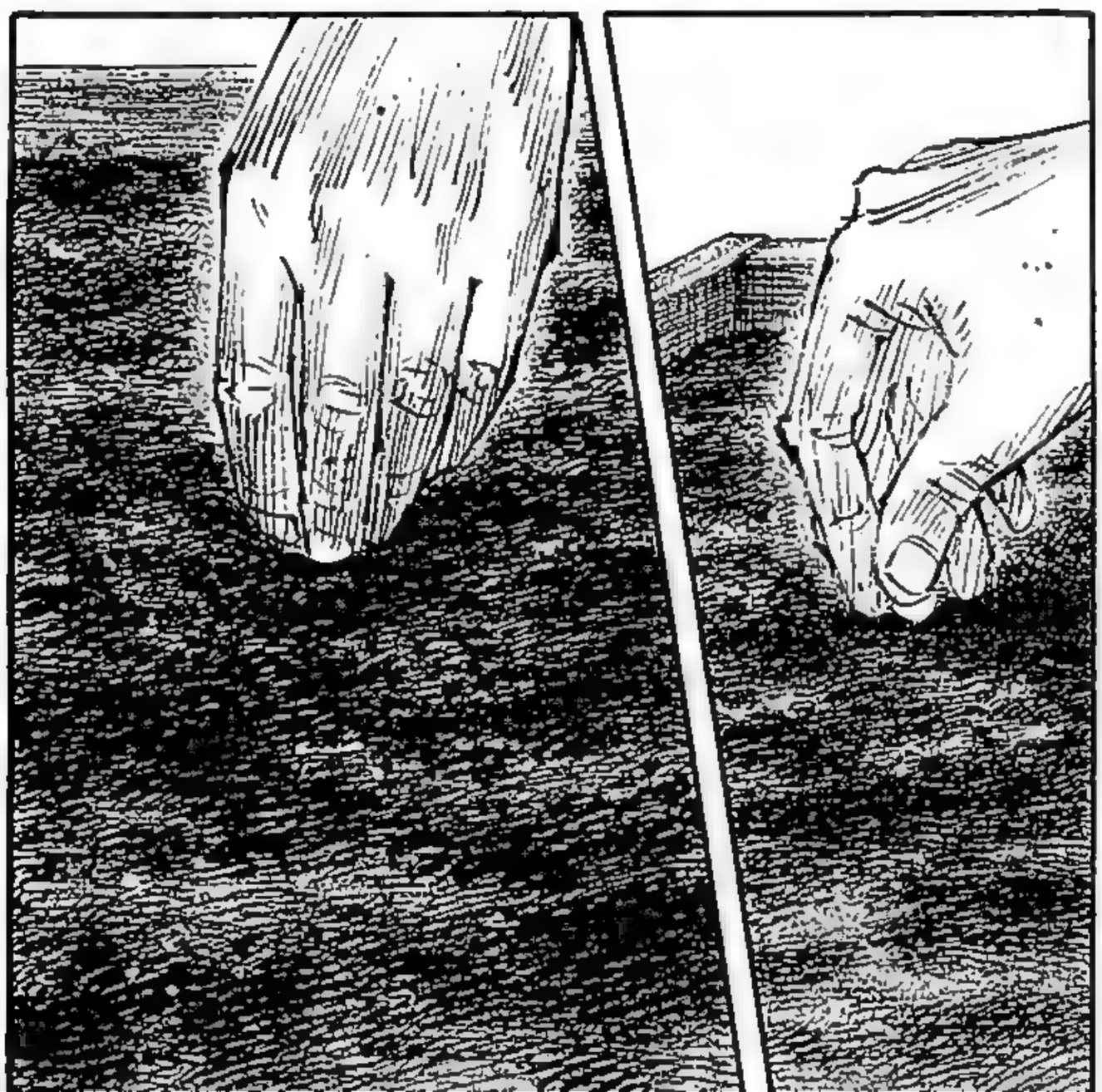
EACH ONE OF THESE SEEDS...
...CONTAINS YOUR LIVES.

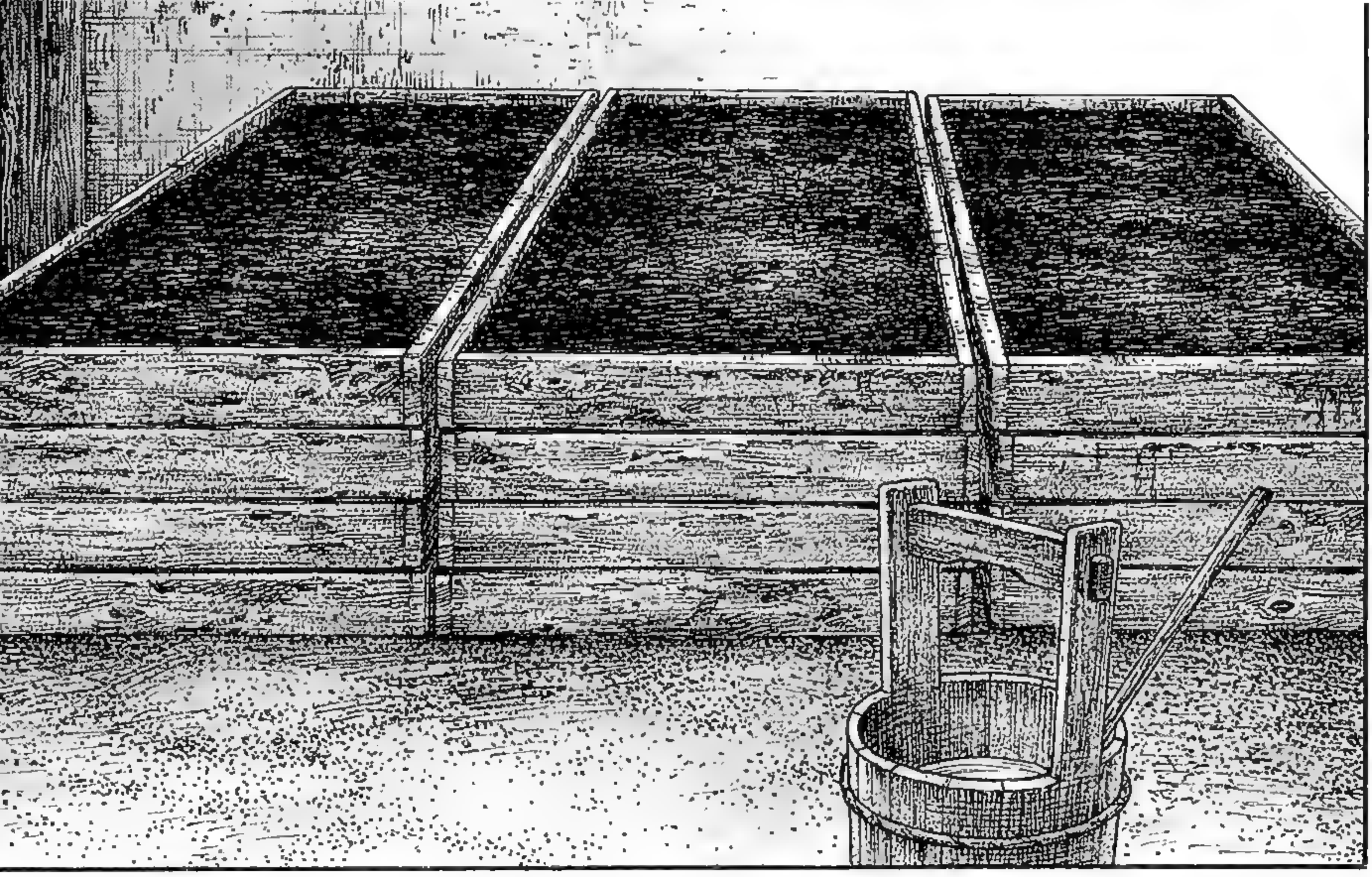
SORRY...
HEY, SHOZO, WHAT'D I SAY?!
PLANT THEM BY SPACING THE HOLES EVENLY WITH YOUR FINGERS.

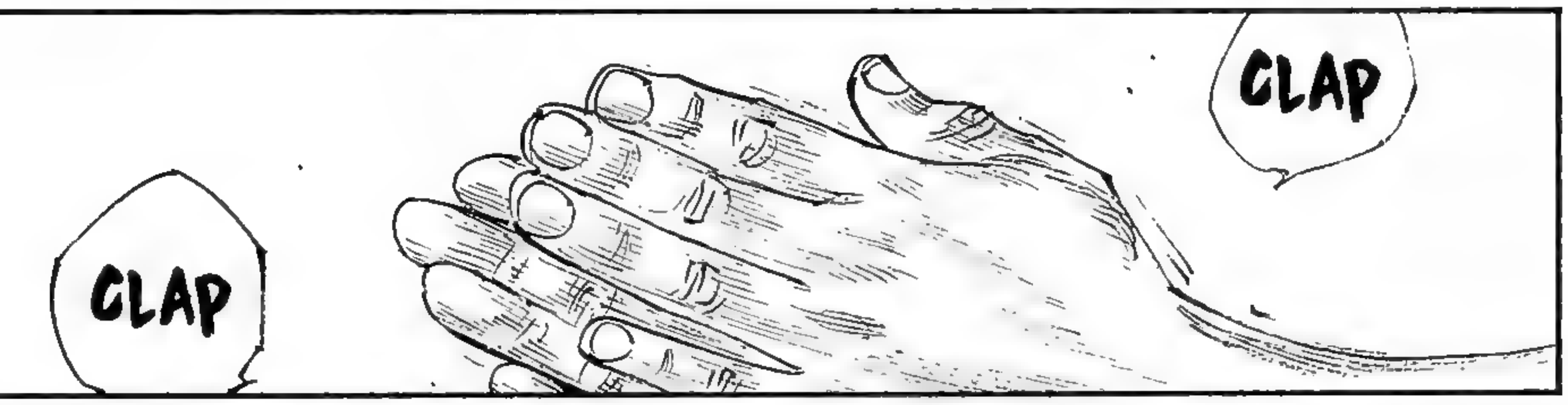
GO AWAY.

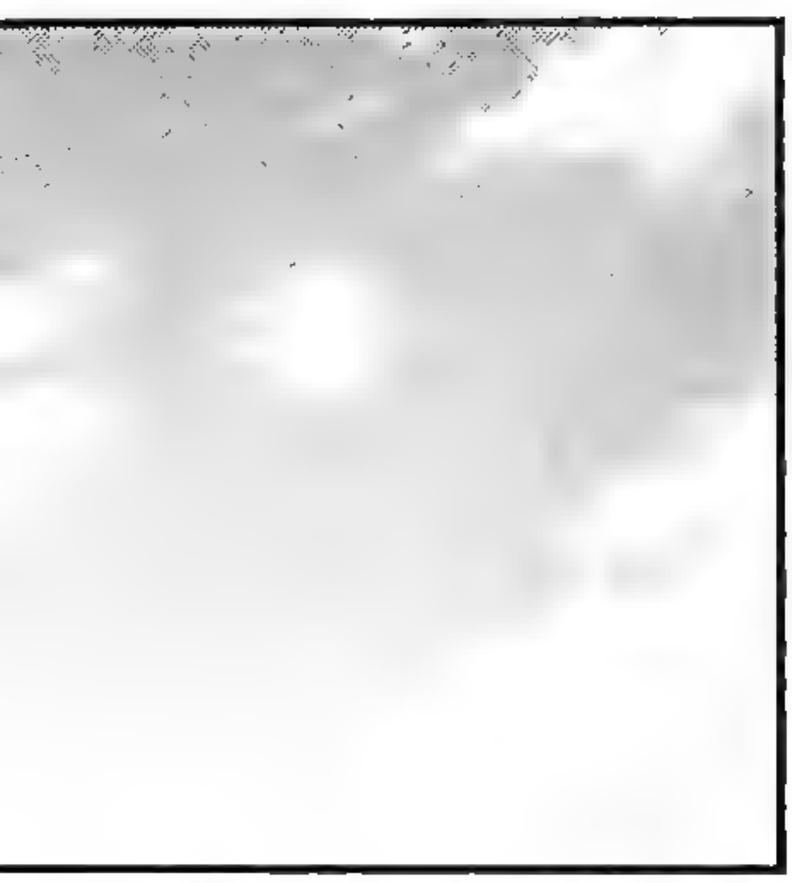


THE PRESENCE OF YOUR TWO SWORDS IS DISTRACTING.
IT'LL RUIN OUR CROP.






CLAP
CLAP



WHY DO YOU STAY IN THIS GODFORSAKEN PLACE AND WORK THE FIELD?

?

YOU DON'T OWE THEM ANYTHING NOW.

YOU PROVIDED THE STARVING VILLAGE WITH FOOD.

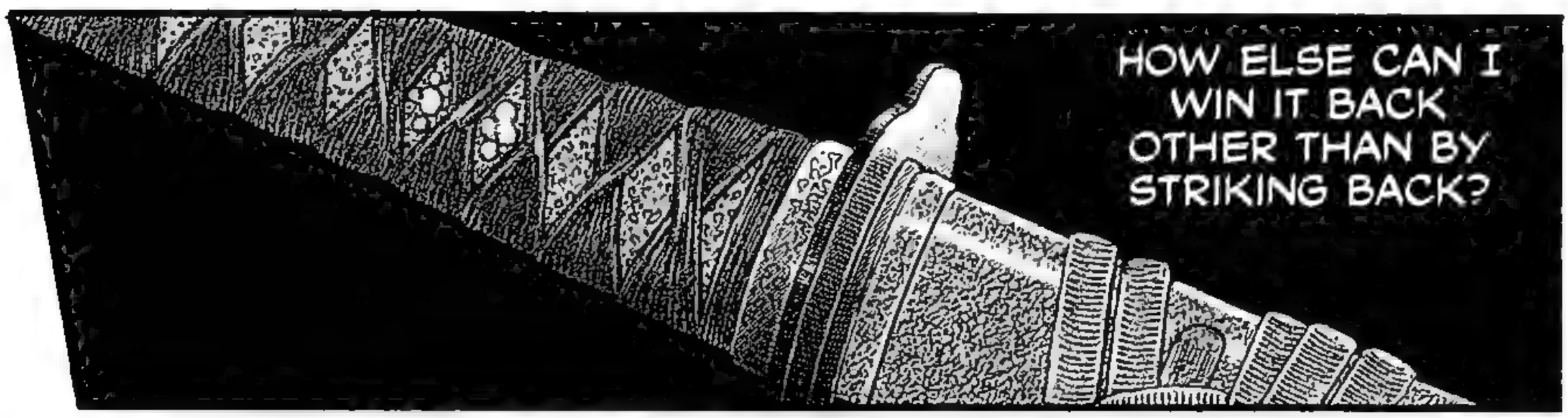
I HAVEN'T EVEN PLANTED THE CROP YET. WE'RE ONLY GETTING STARTED HERE.

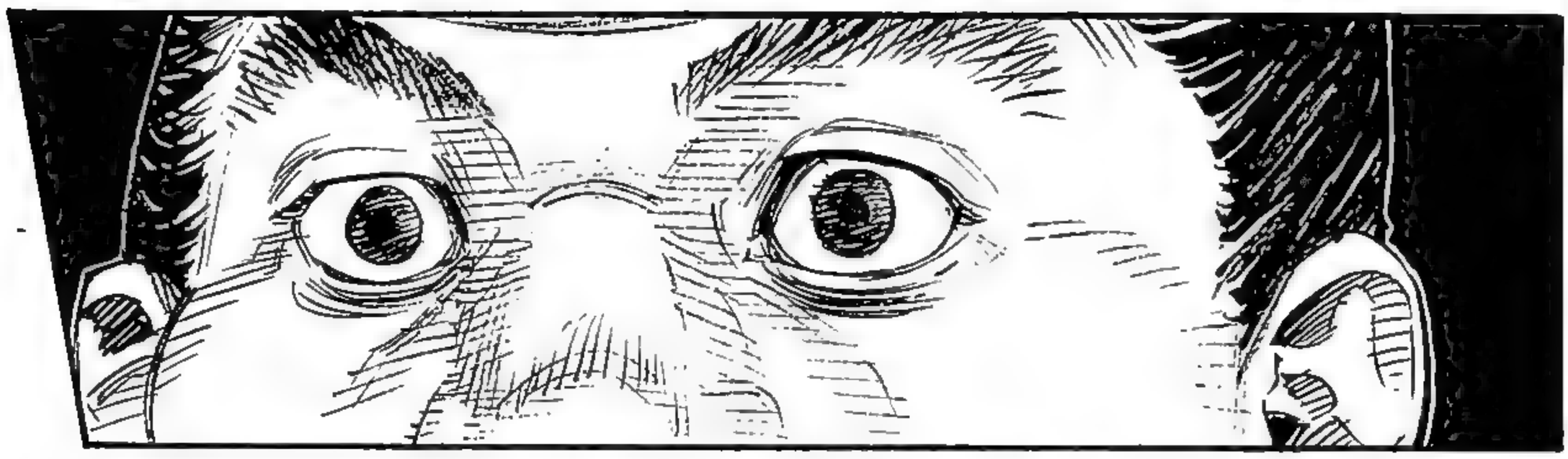
WHAT?

MUSASHI...

HMPH

LOST FAITH IN MY STRENGTH.
NAGAOKA SADONOKAMI MUST HAVE LOST FAITH IN ME AFTER THAT MATCH WITH YOU.


HOW ELSE CAN I WIN IT BACK OTHER THAN BY STRIKING BACK?



UNTIL THAT DAY COMES...
UNTIL THAT DAY COMES, I NEED TO UNDERSTAND YOU, MUSASHI.

SO MUSASHI ASKED FOR YOUR HELP...
I REMEM-BER...
...WHEN HE WAS ONLY SEVENTEEN.
HE WAS A WILD BEAST.
A REAL RASCAL.
WHAT?!
I PUNISHED HIM BY TYING HIM UP AND HANGING HIM FROM A TREE.
BUT...

...HE NEVER ASKED FOR HELP.

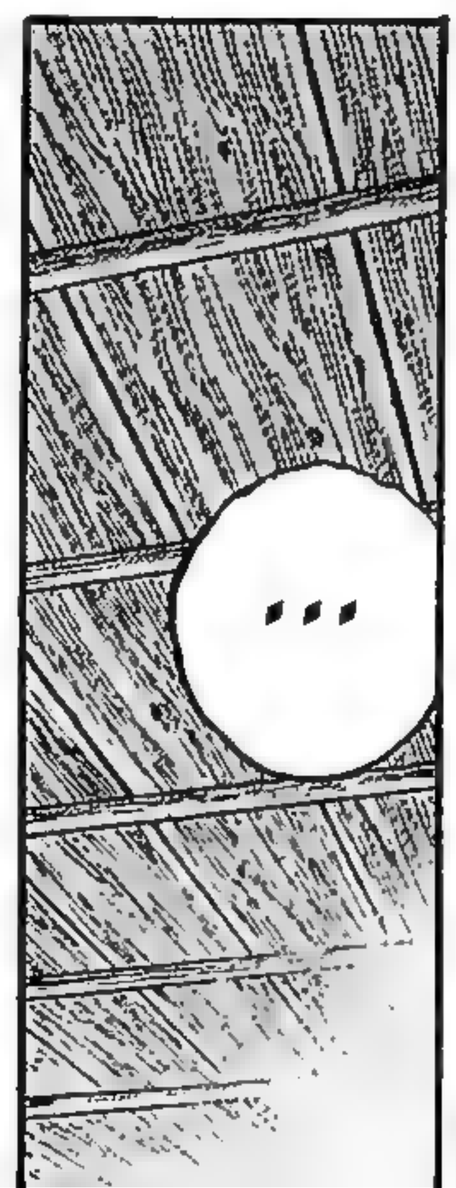
HE JUST BARKED LIKE A DOG, TELLING ME TO KILL HIM.

HA HA...

SO TELL ME, WHAT IS HE REALLY LIKE?

I'VE HEARD THAT THE MIGHTY HOSOKAWA TADAOKI WANTS HIM AS A VASSAL.

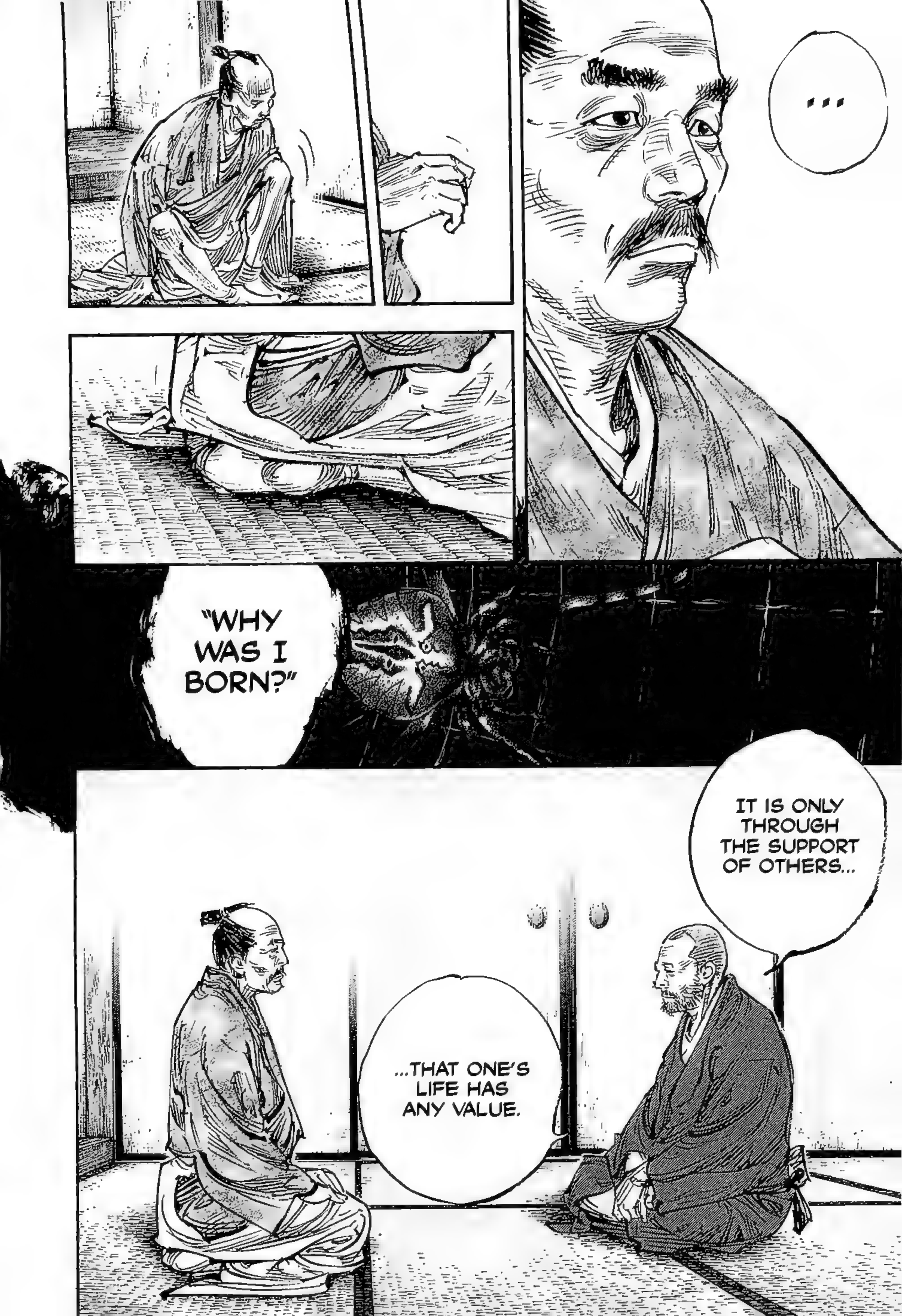
HIS REPUTATION IS UNSURPASSED EVER SINCE HE ANNIHILATED THE YOSHIOKA SCHOOL.



THAT'S HOW HE DESCRIBED HIMSELF.
"I WAS BORN TO FIGHT."
"KILL ME."

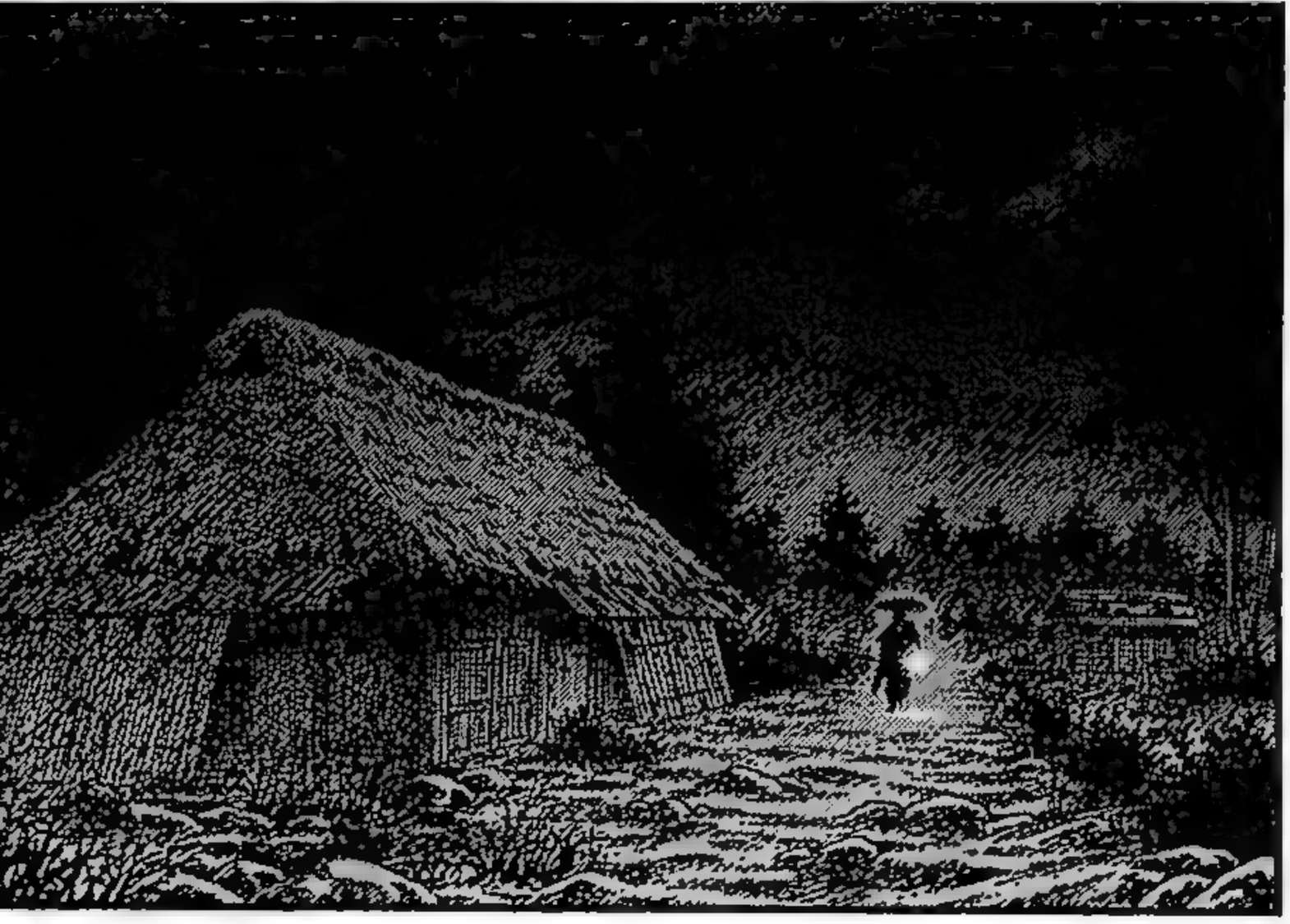
HE ALSO SAID, "LIFE HAS NO WORTH."

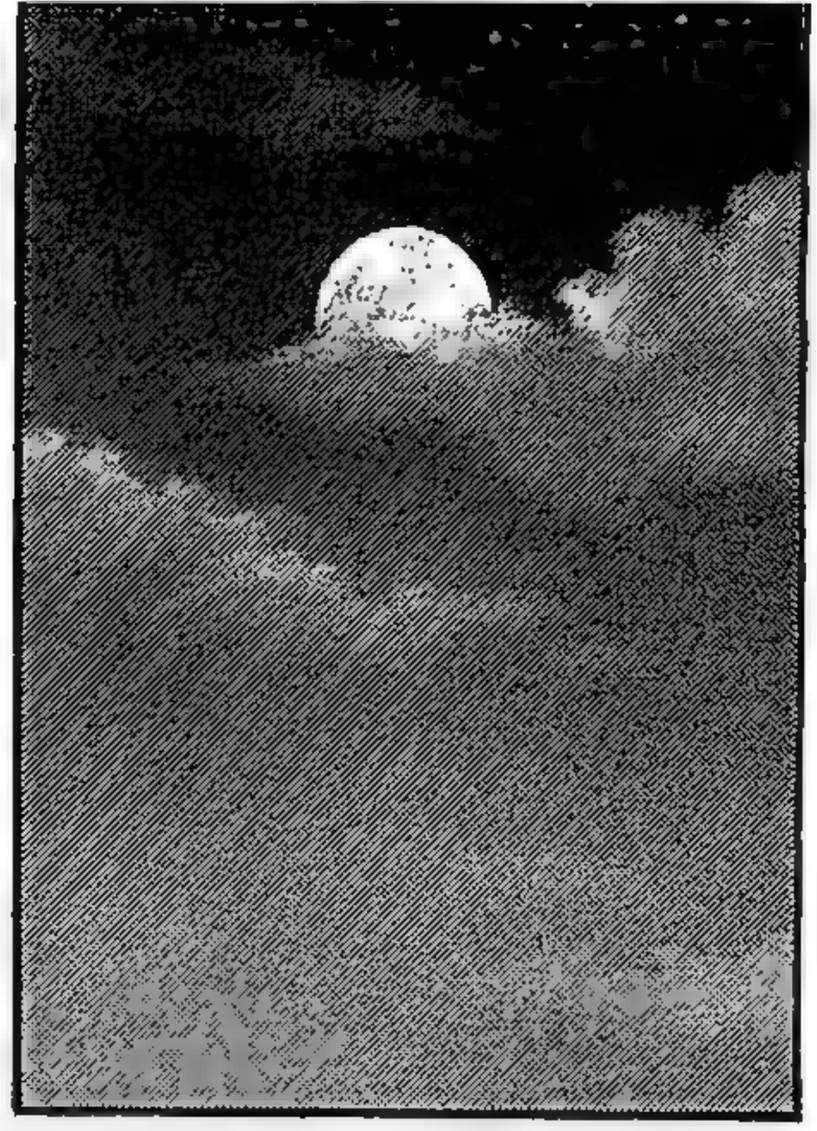
AS LONG AS YOU'RE ONLY CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR OWN LIFE.
LIFE HAS NO WORTH.


...
"WHY WAS I BORN?"
IT IS ONLY THROUGH THE SUPPORT OF OTHERS...
...THAT ONE'S LIFE HAS ANY VALUE.

...MUSASHI.
IT WOULD HAVE BEEN GOOD TO SEE YOU THOUGH...
I THINK...
I'M SURE YOU'RE EVEN STRONGER.
WELL...
WHEN SHALL WE MEET AGAIN, TAKUAN?

...PERHAPS WE SHALL ALL MEET...
...AT KOKURA?
I LOOK FORWARD TO IT.



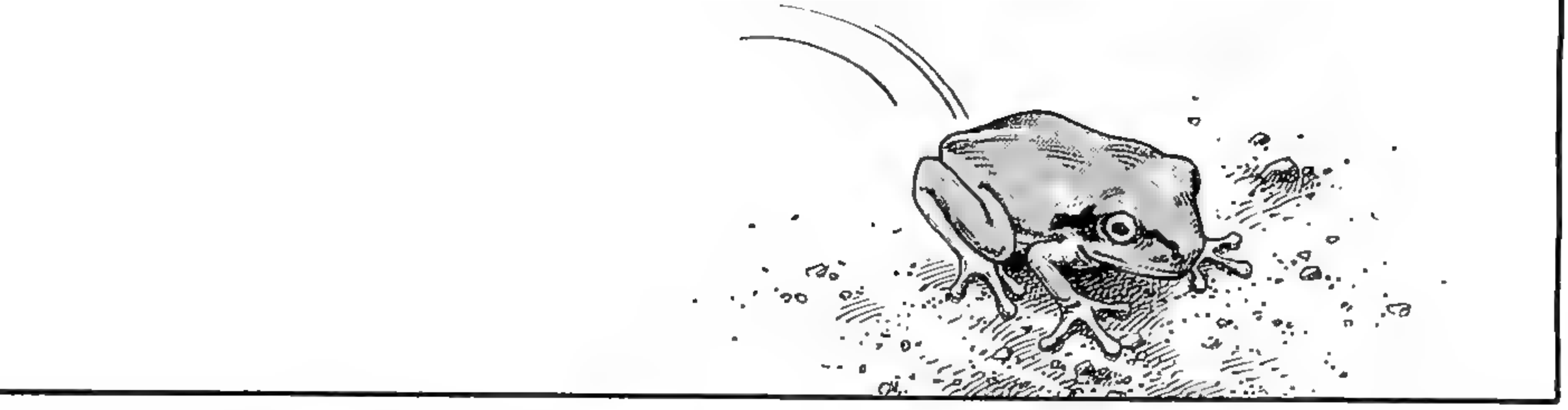


YOU'RE HERE...

"WHY WAS I BORN?"

"FOR WHAT?"

...TO SUPPORT OTHERS.



DO NOT RESIST THE FATE OF LIFE...

...THAT IS THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN BE COMPLETELY...

...FREE...

LOOK! THE SEEDS ARE SPROUTING !!

WHAT?!

AHHH!!

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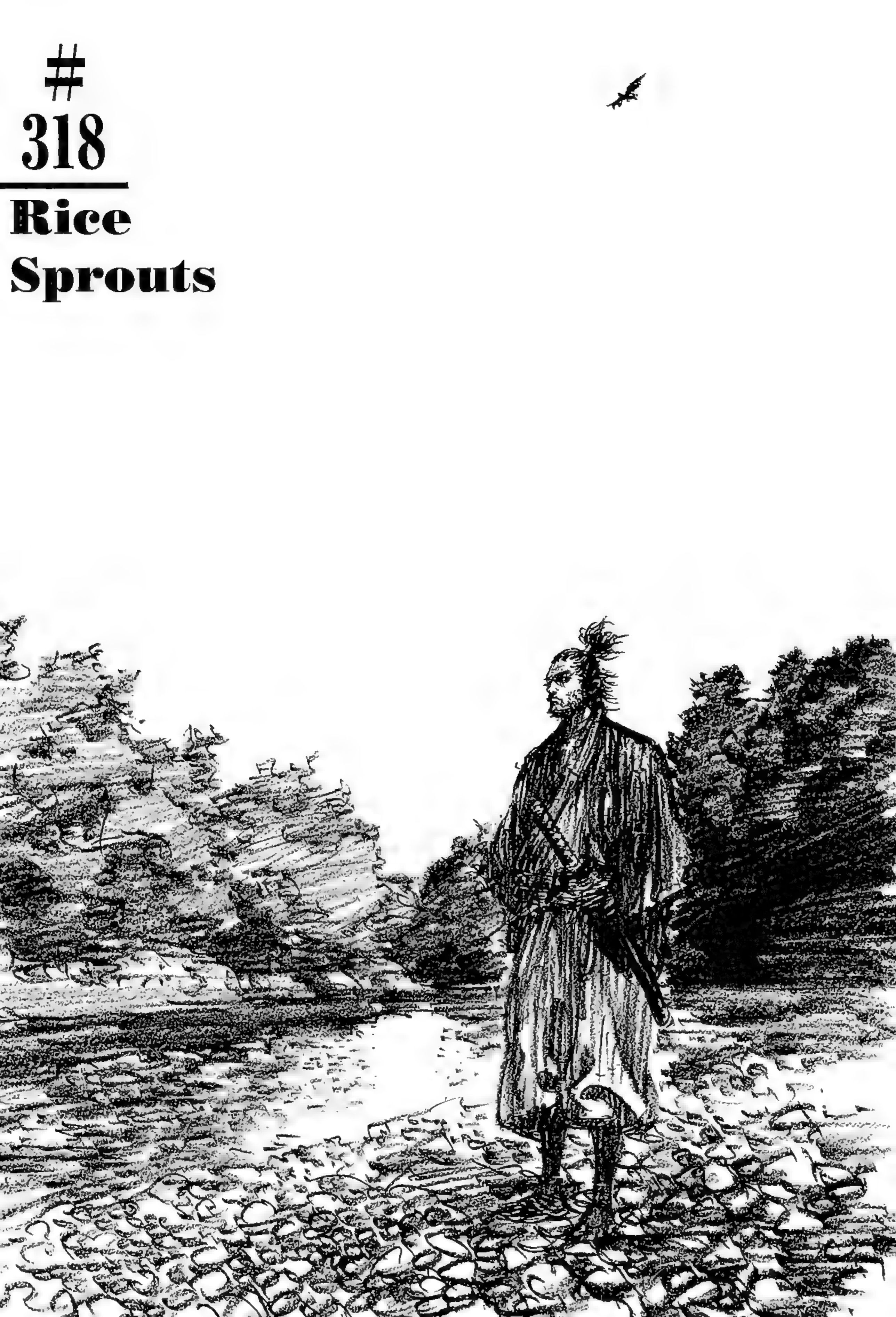
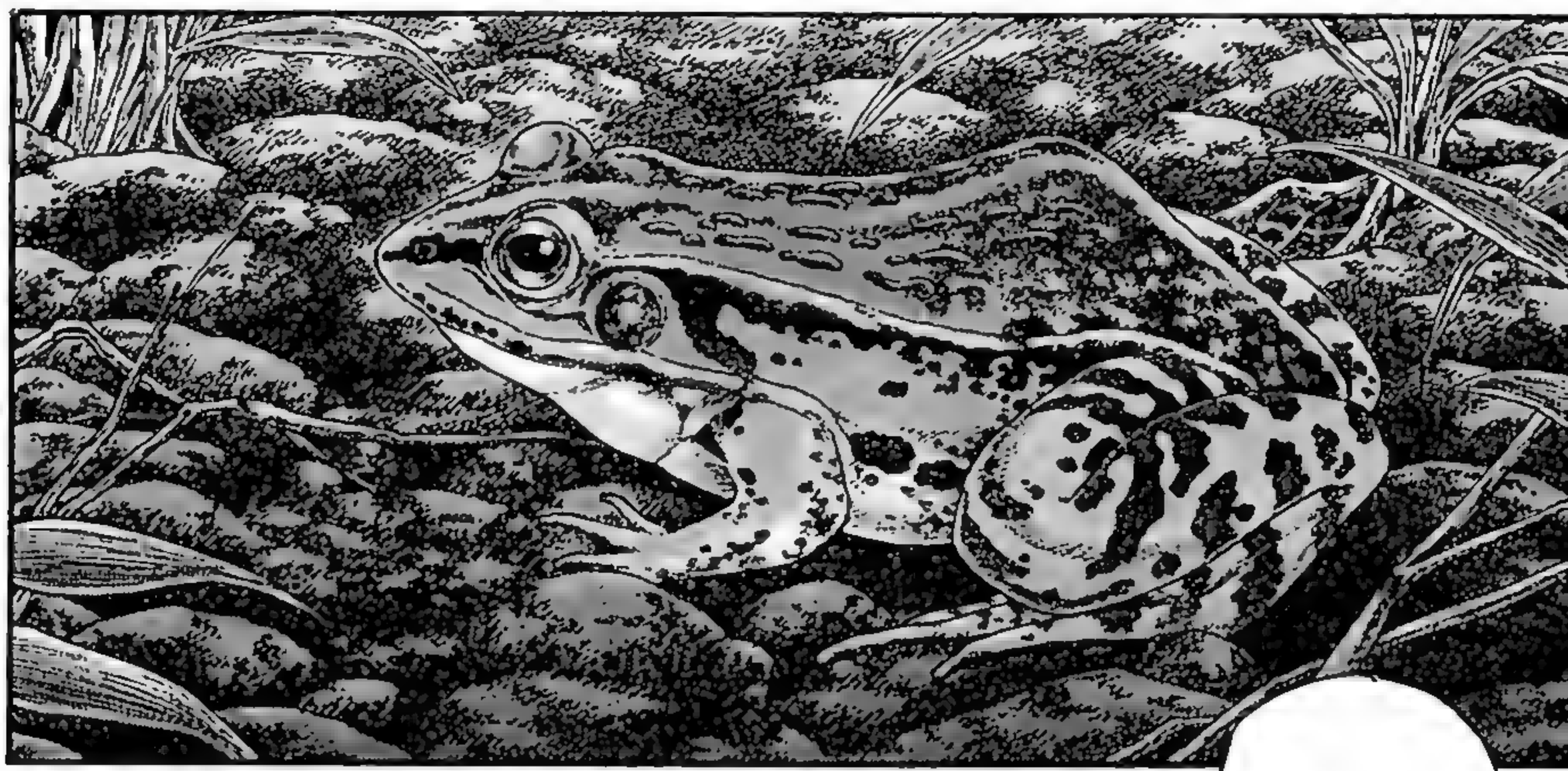
Rice Sprouts



...WE CAN BEGIN PLANTING.
IT'S SPRING.
FINAL-LY...
A BUTTERFLY.

NOT YET.



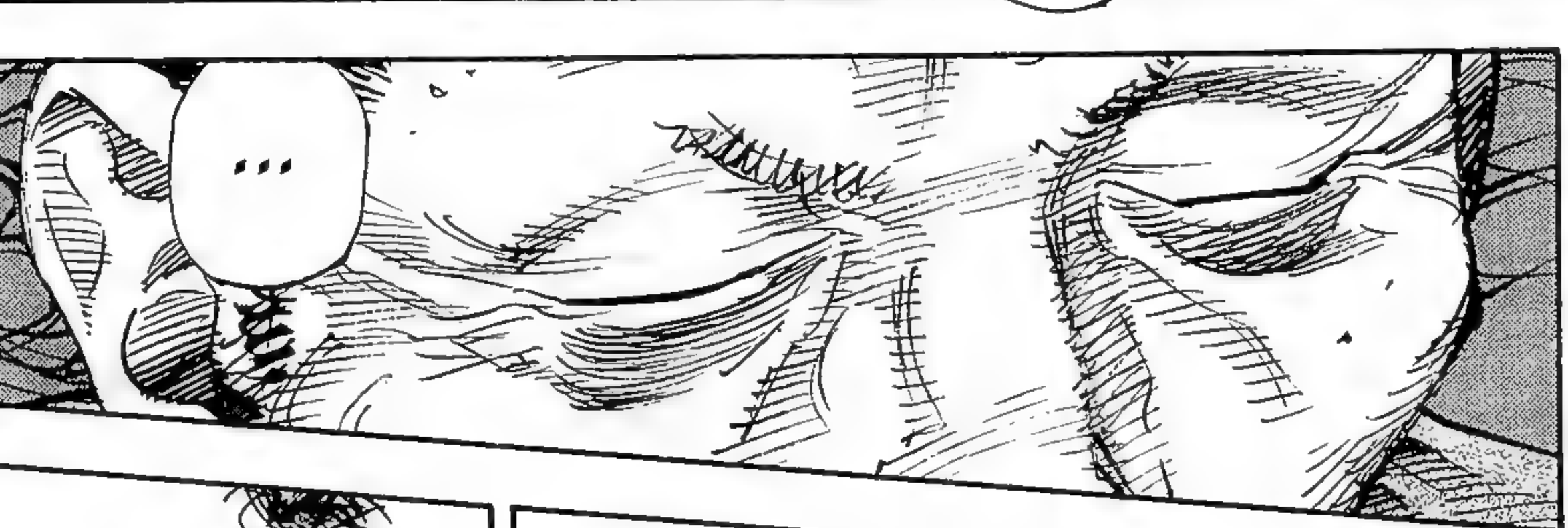
NOT YET.
COME ON, EVEN THE FROGS HAVE COME OUT!

SPRING'S HERE.
IT'S TIME TO PLANT THE RICE.

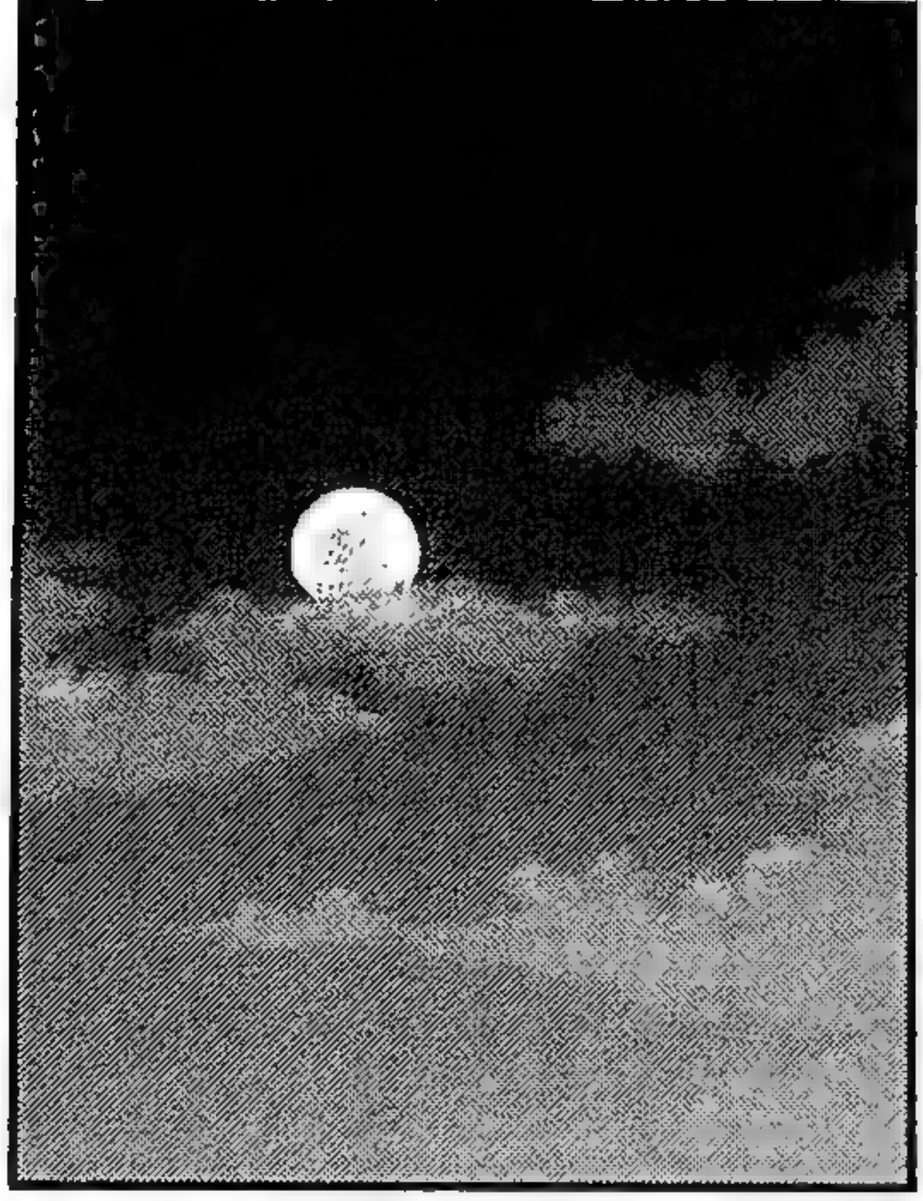
WE DON'T WANT ANYONE ELSE TO STARVE TO DEATH!
WE NEED TO HURRY THE HARVEST!
THE FOOD WON'T LAST MUCH LONGER...

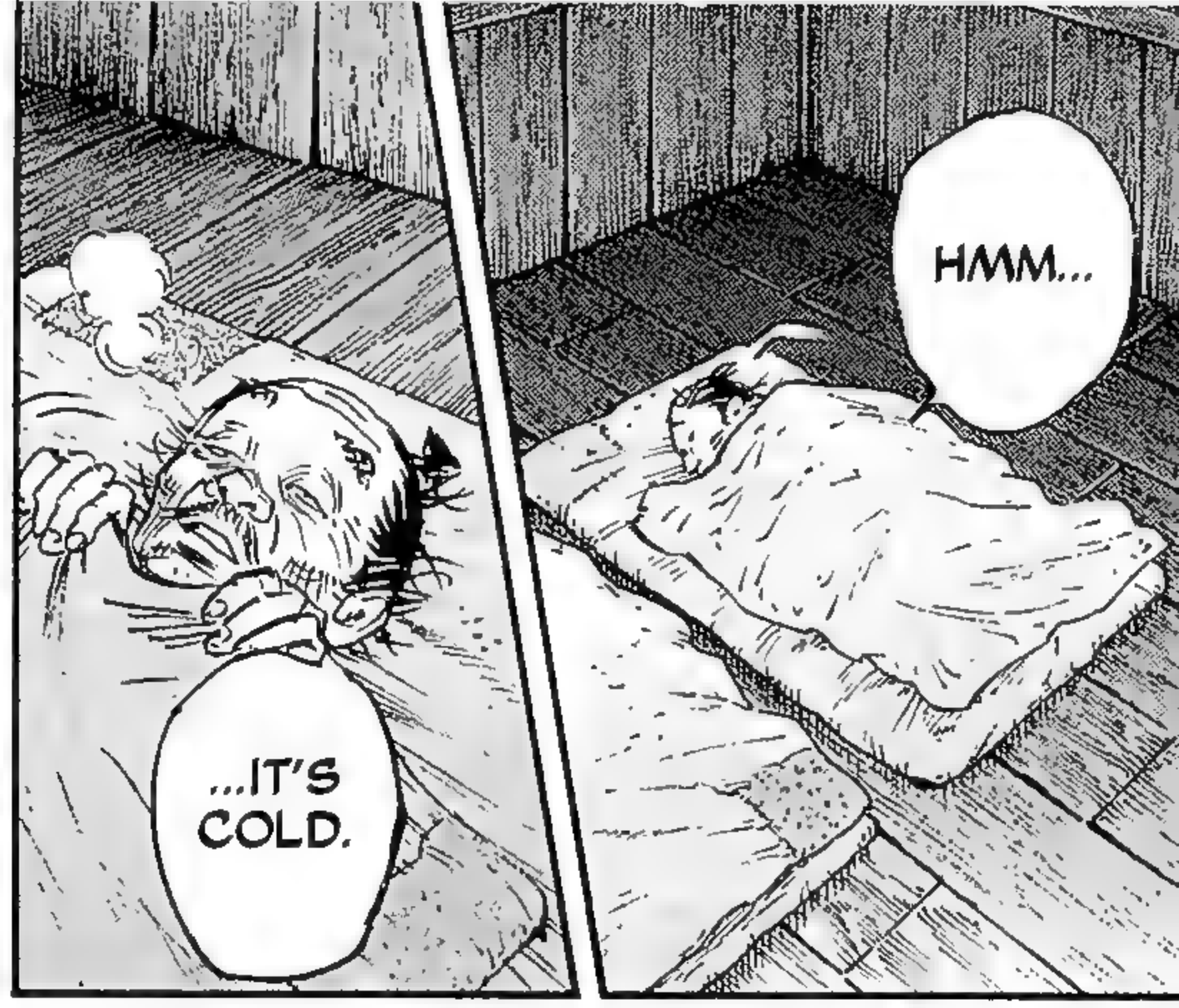
IF WE DELAY THIS ANY FURTHER, THE HARVEST WILL COME TO LATE.

SHUSAKU!

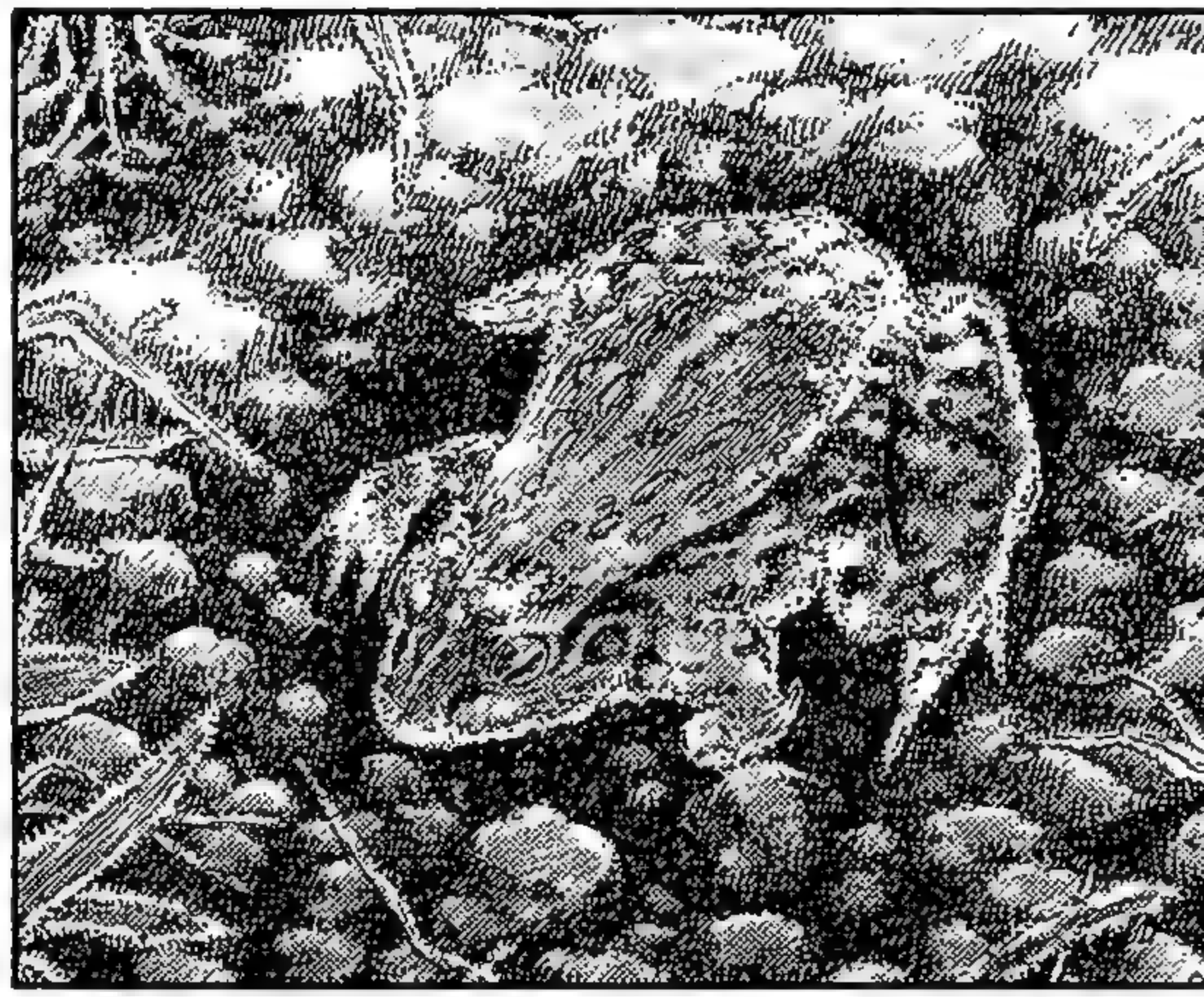

...

HE'S SO GODDAMN STUBBORN. THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE...




HMM...
...IT'S COLD.

THEY COME OUT THINKING IT'S SPRING-TIME...
SOME FROGS ARE DUMBER THAN OTHERS.
...ONLY TO FREEZE AT THE TAIL END OF WINTER.



THERE HAVE TO BE ENOUGH FROGS...
FLIP

...

WE TREAT THE RICE CROP AS IF IT WERE A BABY.

YOU HAVE TO LOOK AFTER IT ONLY UNTIL IT CAN STAND ON ITS FEET.

YOU HAVE TO LAY THE FOUNDATION.

...TO BRING OUT THE SNAKES THAT'LL FEED ON 'EM. THAT'S WHEN SPRING COMES.

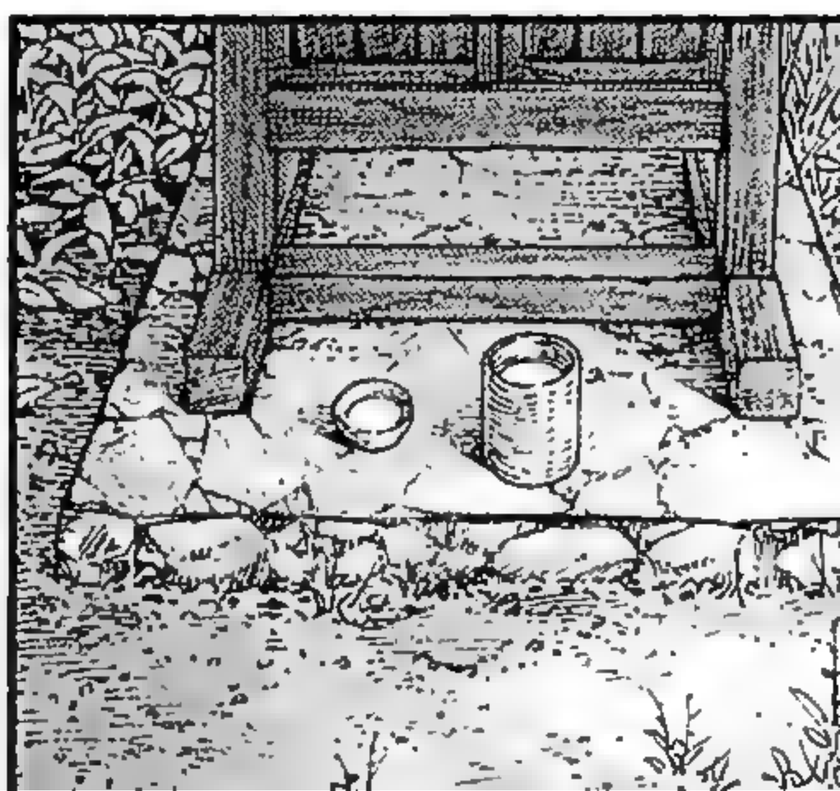
...AND WE ALL STARVE TO DEATH.

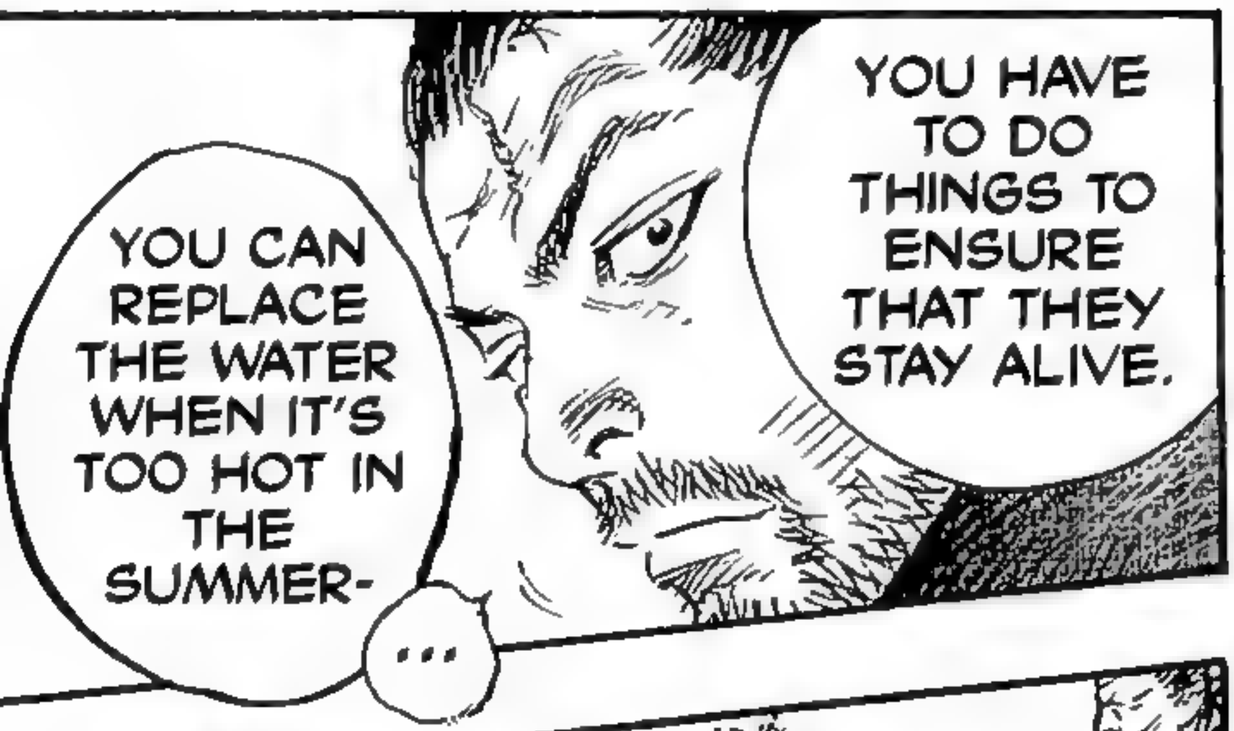
...WE FAIL...

FLUP

FLUP

...




YOU CAN REPLACE THE WATER WHEN IT'S TOO HOT IN THE SUMMER-
...
YOU HAVE TO DO THINGS TO ENSURE THAT THEY STAY ALIVE.

MUSASHI, YOUR FIELD... WON'T WORK LIKE THIS.
IT'S NOT OVER AFTER YOU PLANT THE SEEDLINGS.

OH!
BUT THIS FIELD DOESN'T EVEN HAVE AN OUTLET.
HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DRAIN IT?
GET TO WORK, YOU FOOL!

...

AHH, IT IS GETTING WARMER.

GET PLENTY OF SUNSHINE.
GROW...

TELL ME...
...WHAT CAN WE DO...
NOW THEN...

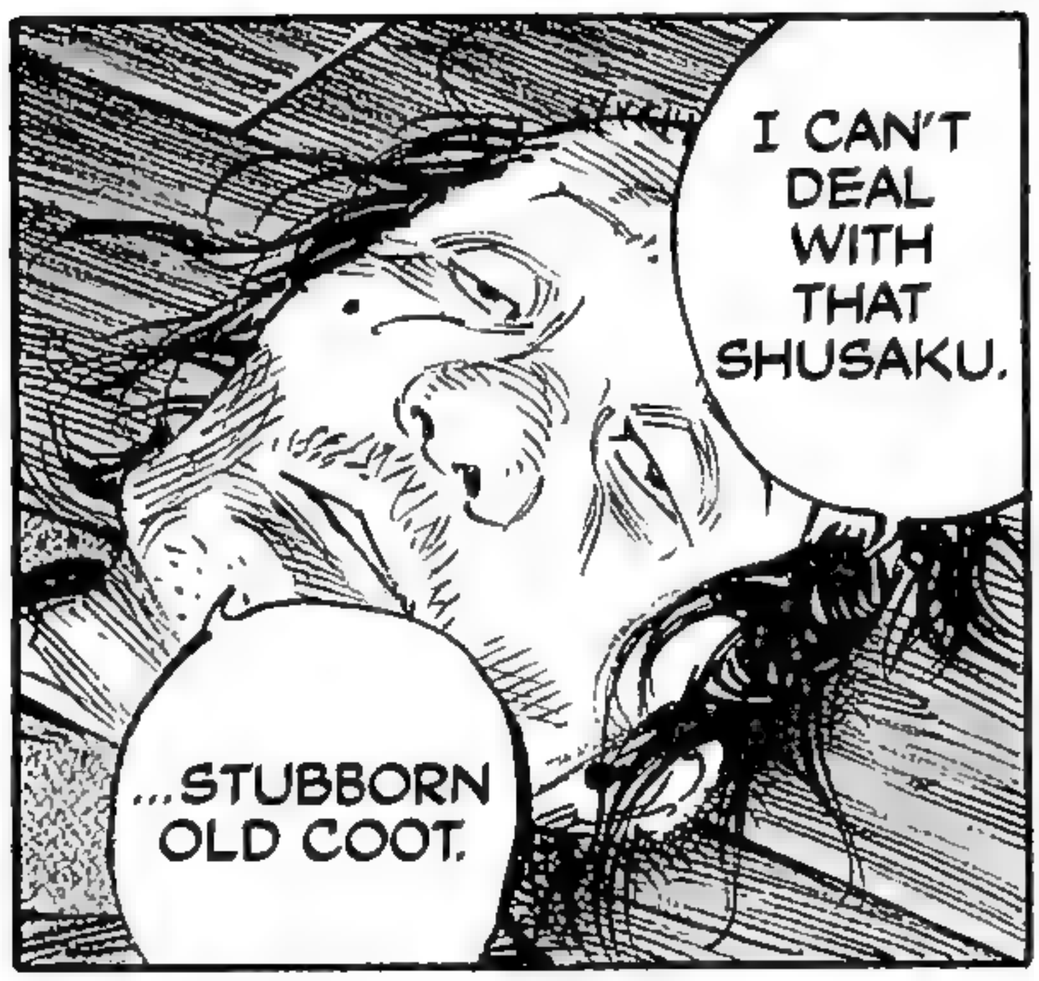
...TO MAKE SURE YOU WON'T FAIL?

...

I KNOW I KNOW. THERE'S NO ANSWER.

HA HA!

ARGH...


I CAN'T DEAL WITH THAT SHUSAKU.
...STUBBORN OLD COOT.

I QUIT.

?!

...

BUT YOU SWORE... YOU WOULD COOPERATE WITH EVERYONE TO GET THROUGH THIS.
...
IT'LL WORK OUT WITHOUT ME. I'M DONE.

YAAH

!!

STOP IT, HATSU!

YAH!

STOP IT, HATSU!

YAH!

YOU PLAN ON LETTING YOUR WIFE AND CHILDREN STARVE?

PLEASE!!

MUSASHI SENSEI...

SKRCH

SKRCH

I TOLD YOU...

TOYO-ZAEMON...

YOU HAVE THIS INSTRUCTOR ...

NO...

WE WANT YOU, MUSASHI.

GRRR

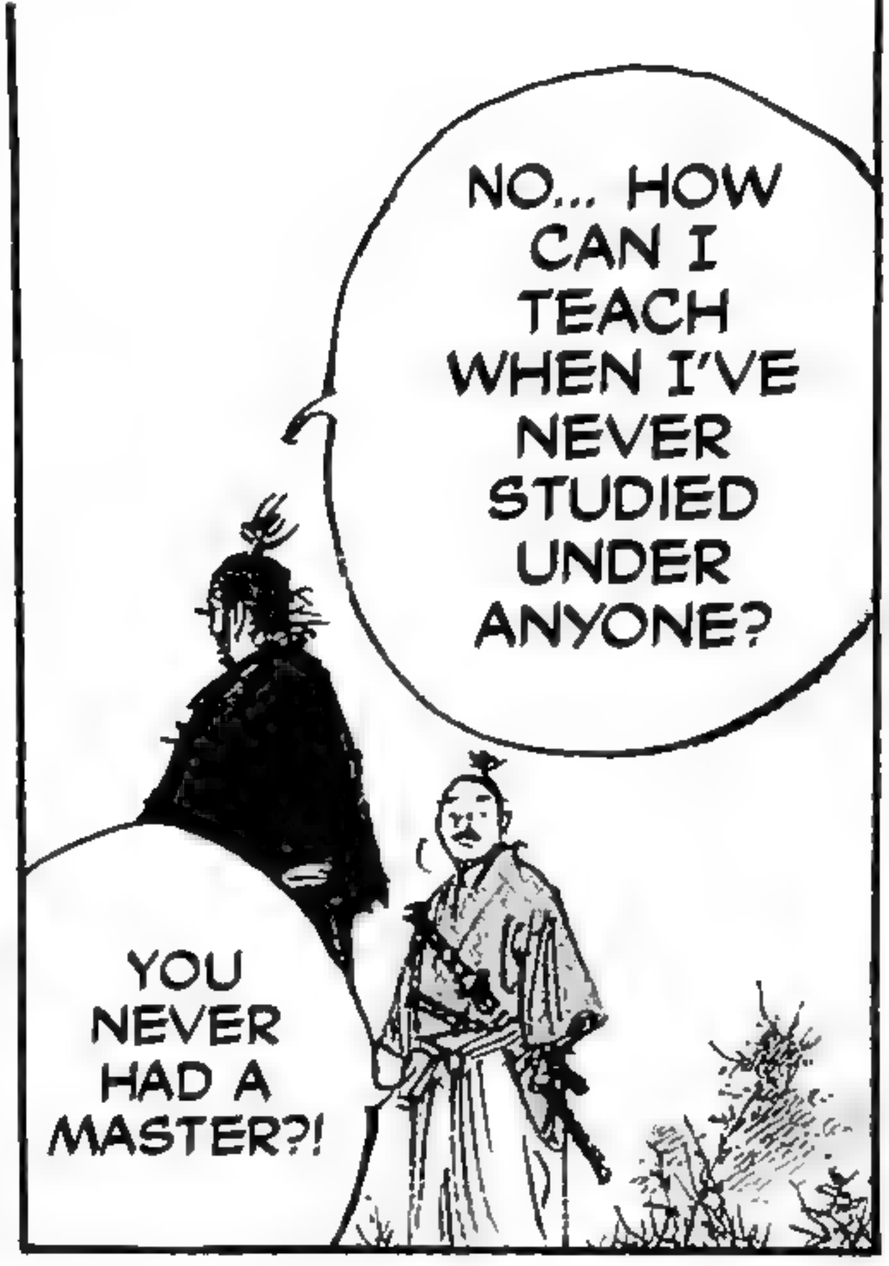
RIGHT.

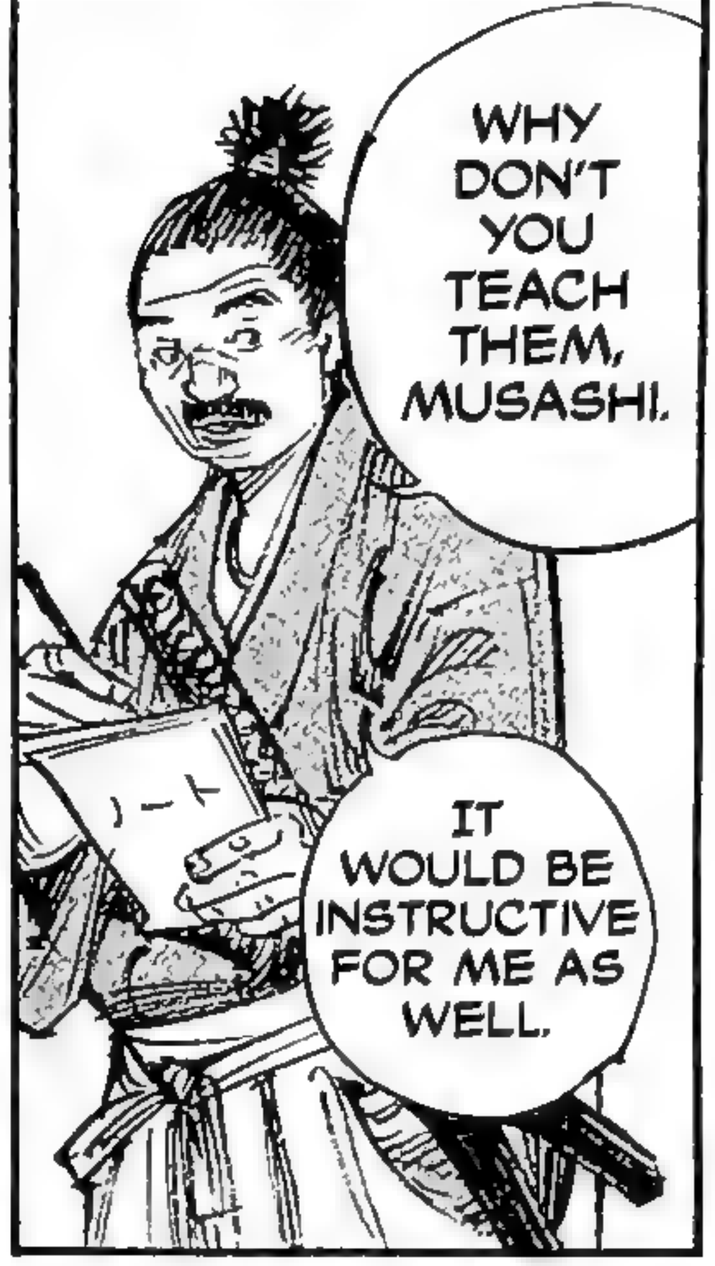
BETTER TO LEARN FROM THE WINNER, NOT THE LOSER.

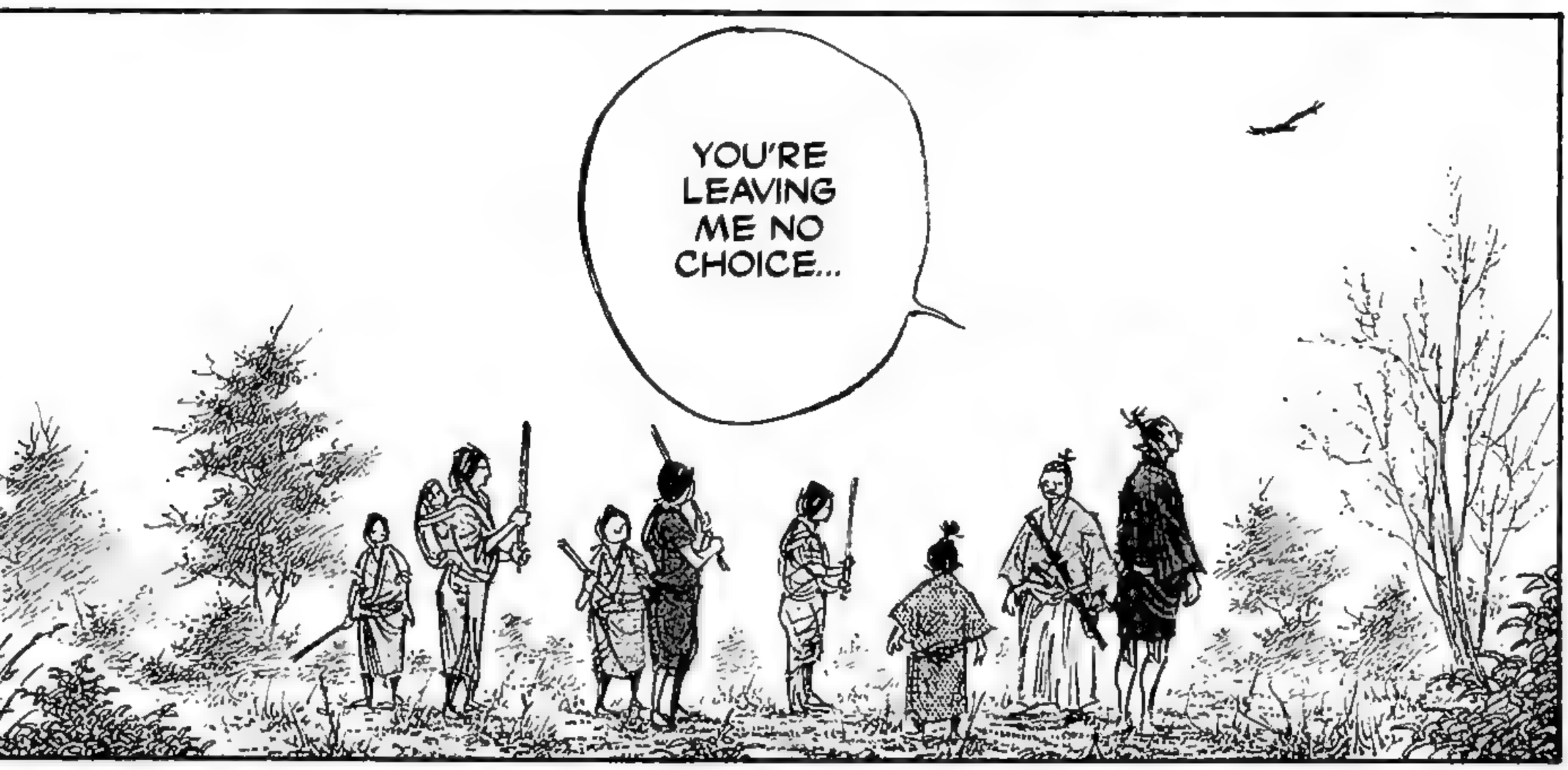
THE WOMEN HERE ARE STRONGER THAN THE MEN.
PLEASE MUSASHI SENSEI.
MUSASHI-
YAHH!
I HOPE...
I'M SO SORRY ABOUT KISUKE...
TOMI...
BUT...
I KNOW I'LL PROBABLY NEVER HAVE TO FIGHT.

...I STILL WANT TO BE STRONG.

HE'S ONLY TEACHING ME.
NO!
LET'S LEARN TOGETHER, IORI!
C'MON!


NO... HOW CAN I TEACH WHEN I'VE NEVER STUDIED UNDER ANYONE?
YOU NEVER HAD A MASTER?!


WHY DON'T YOU TEACH THEM, MUSASHI.
IT WOULD BE INSTRUCTIVE FOR ME AS WELL.


YOU'RE LEAVING ME NO CHOICE...

AHEM...
ALL RIGHT THEN!

?!
JUST SWING THE SWORD ANY WAY YOU PLEASE.

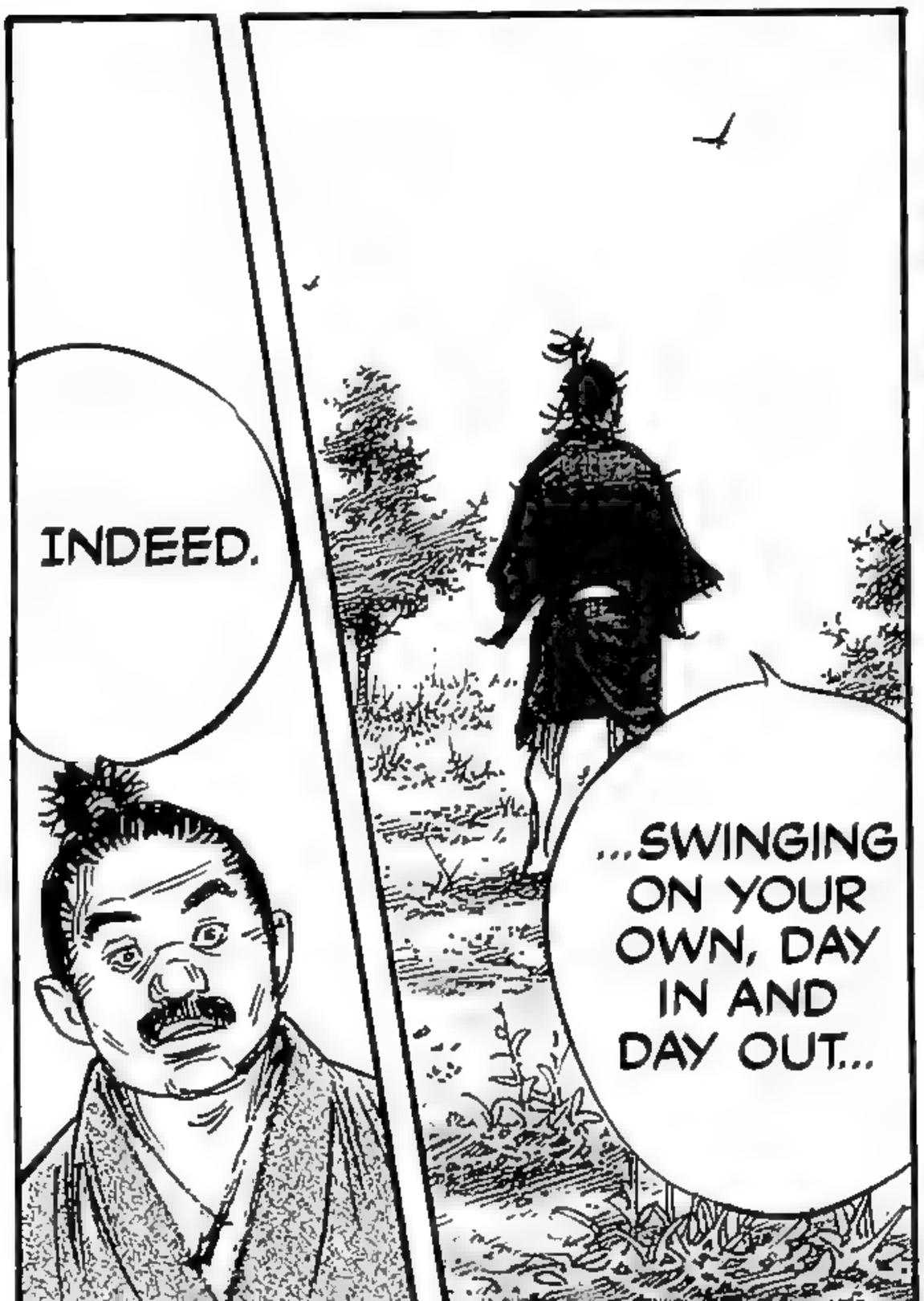
THIS ISN'T DOING ANY GOOD...
HUP!
HAH
YAH!

I FORGOT TO ADD...
OH...

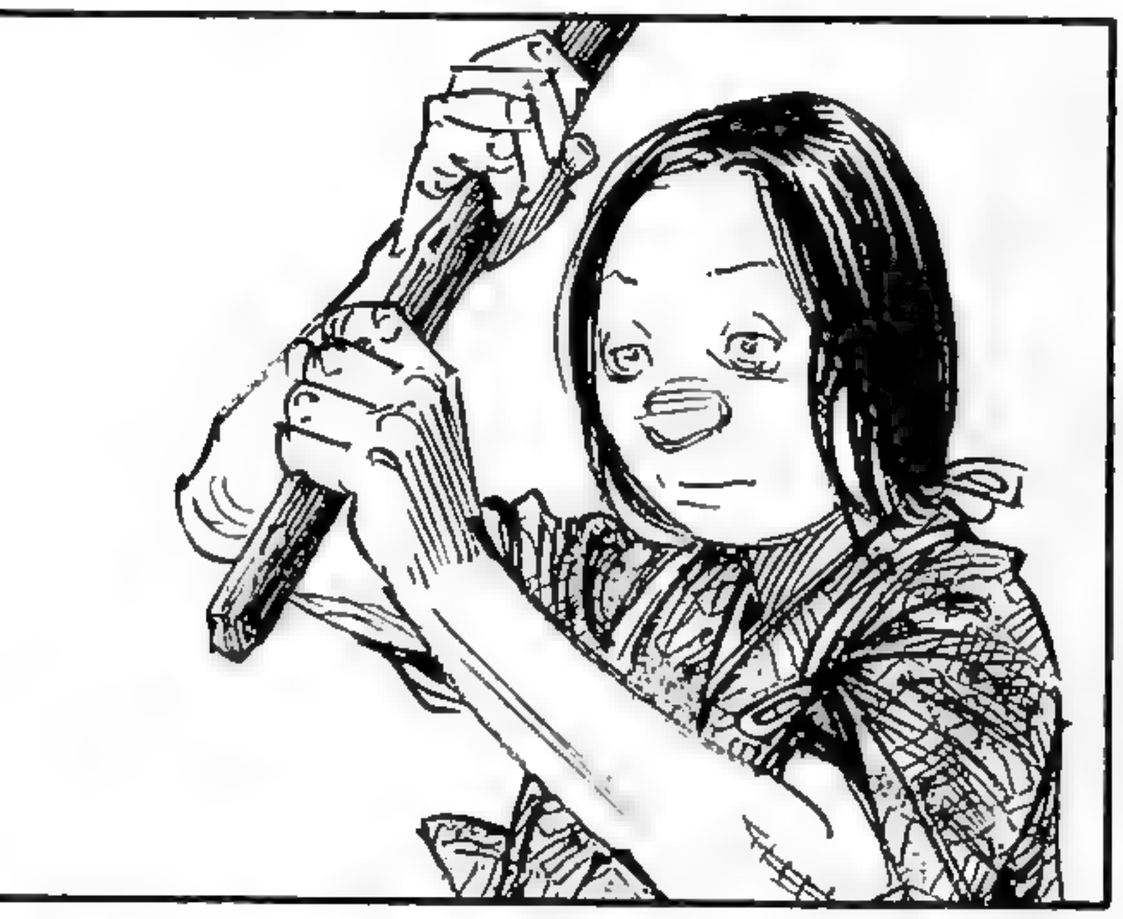
SWING AS IF YOU HAVE NO ARMS.

?
?
?

YOU WANT ME TO TEACH YOU SWORDS-MANSHIP?
I MEAN, REALLY ...

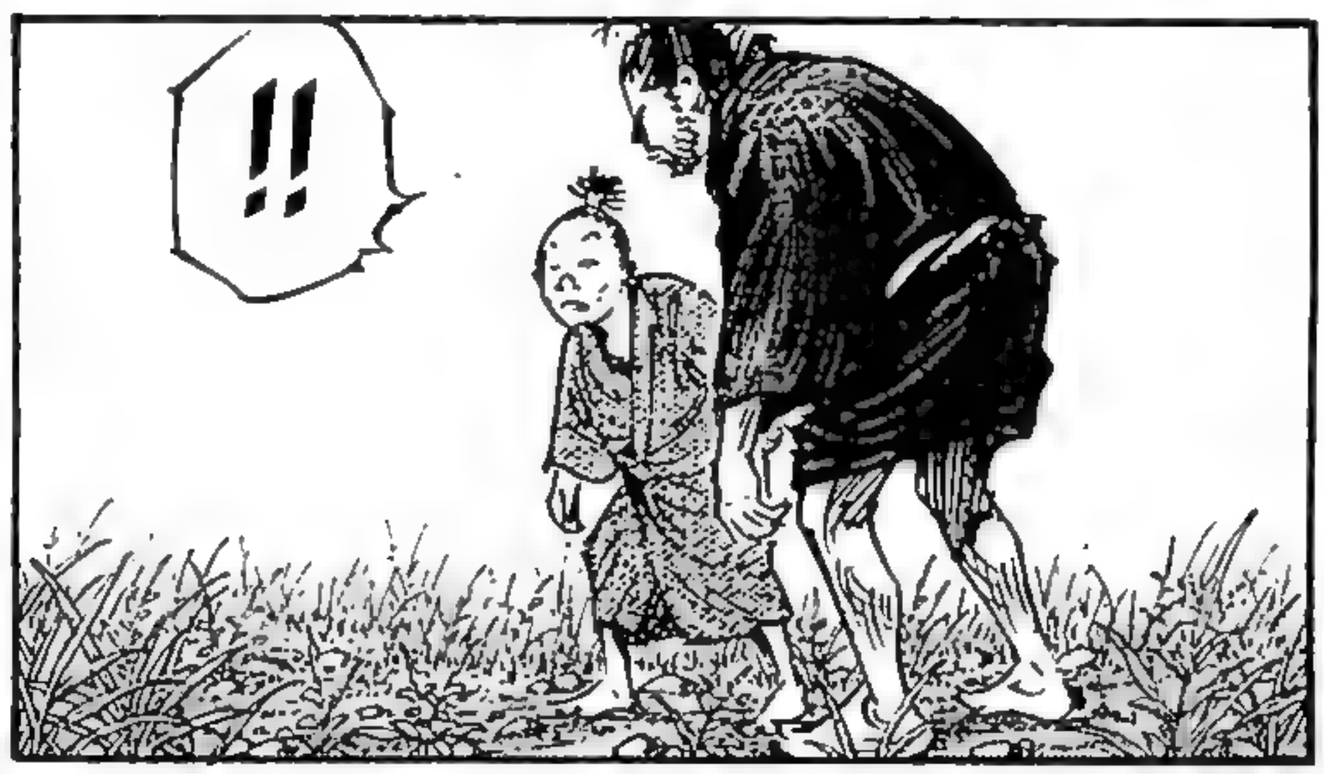

INDEED.
...SWINGING ON YOUR OWN, DAY IN AND DAY OUT...

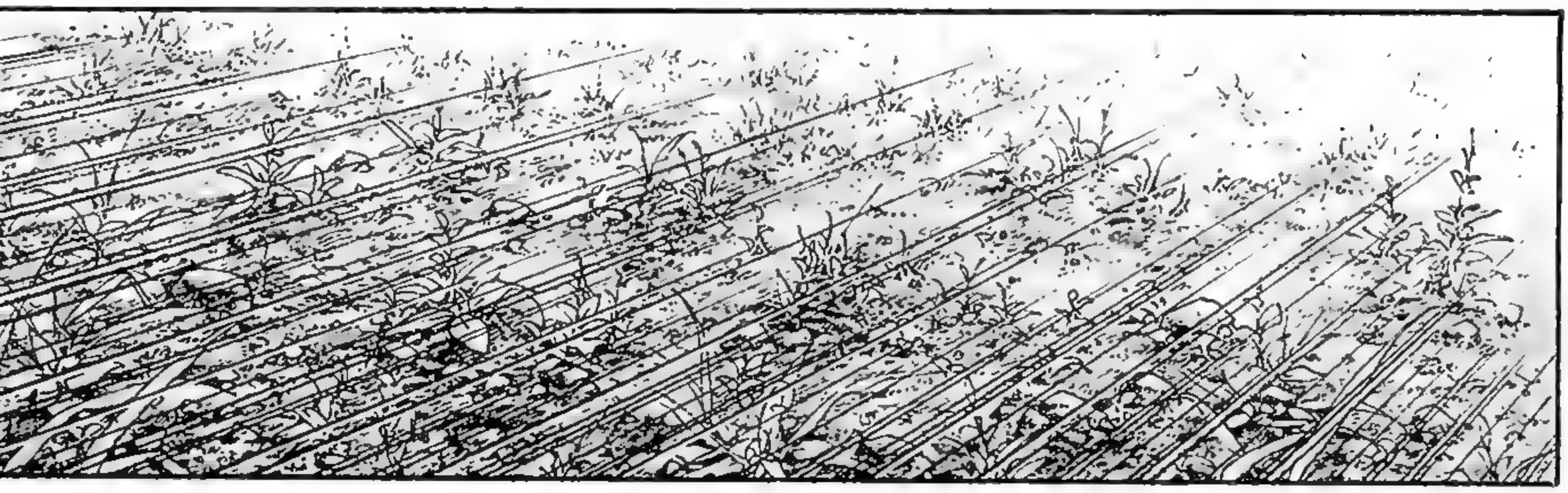
HOW CAN YOU EXPECT ANYTHING...
...WITHOUT FIRST...

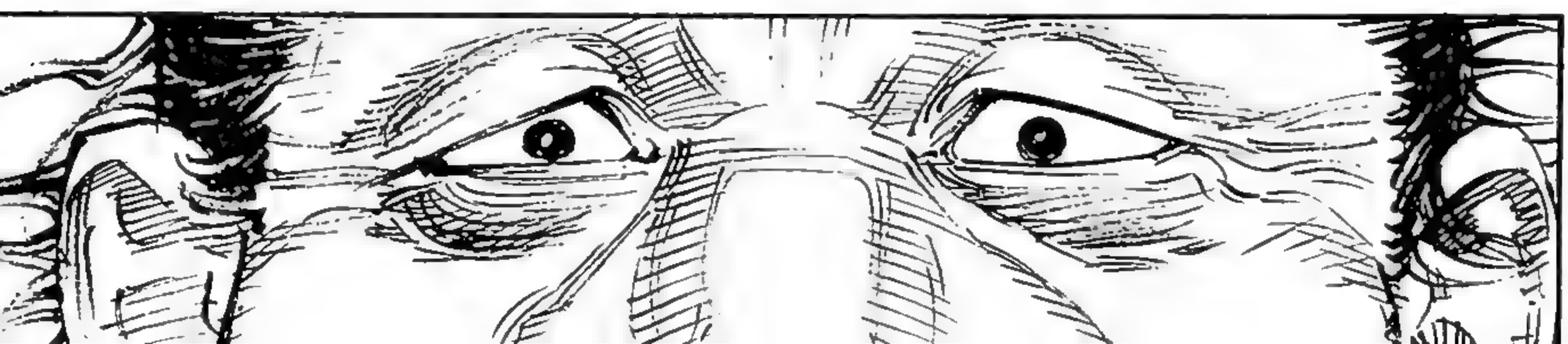


SWINGING SWORDS WITH NO INTENT TO FIGHT.

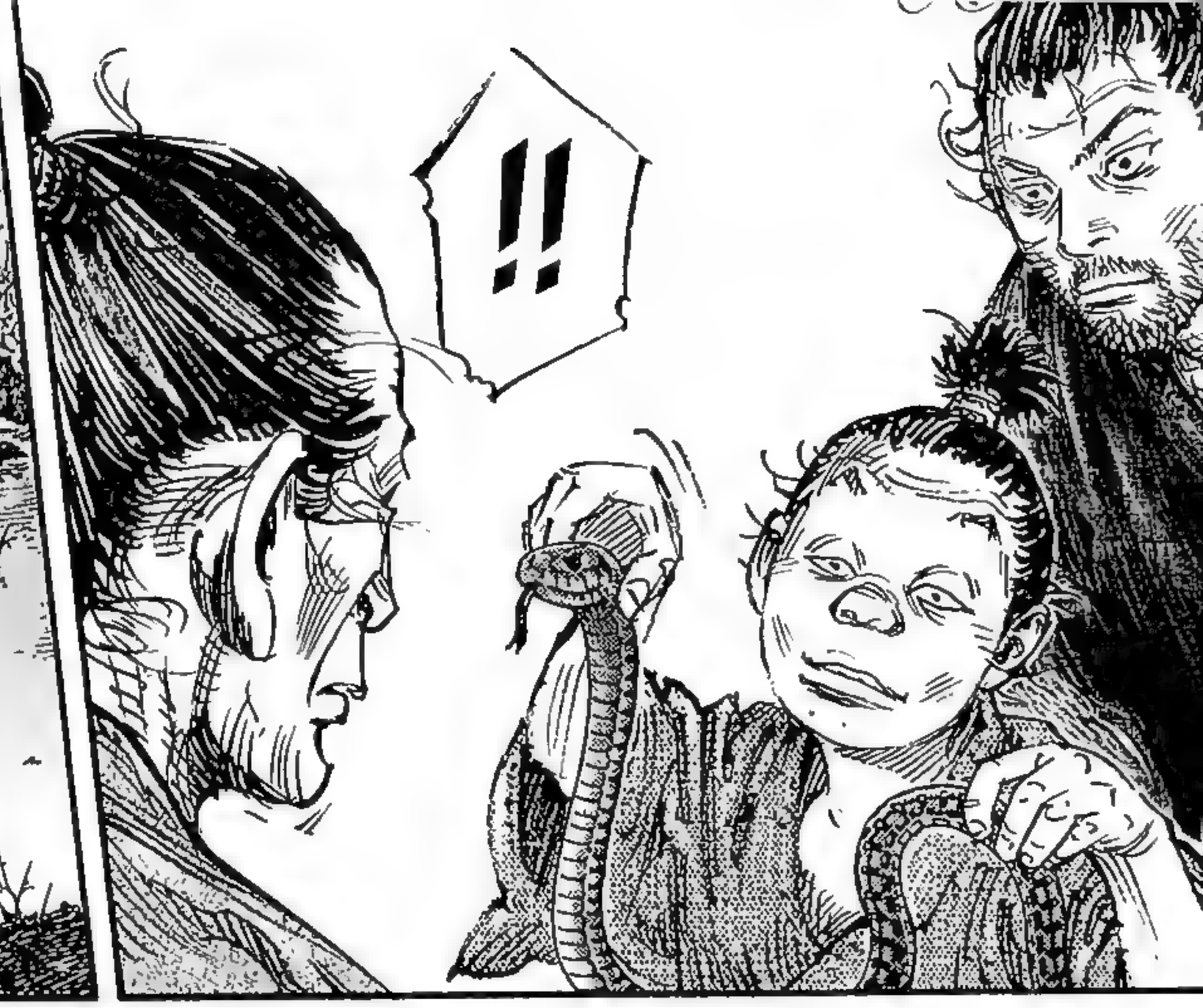
WHAT PURPOSE COULD THAT POSSIBLY SERVE?





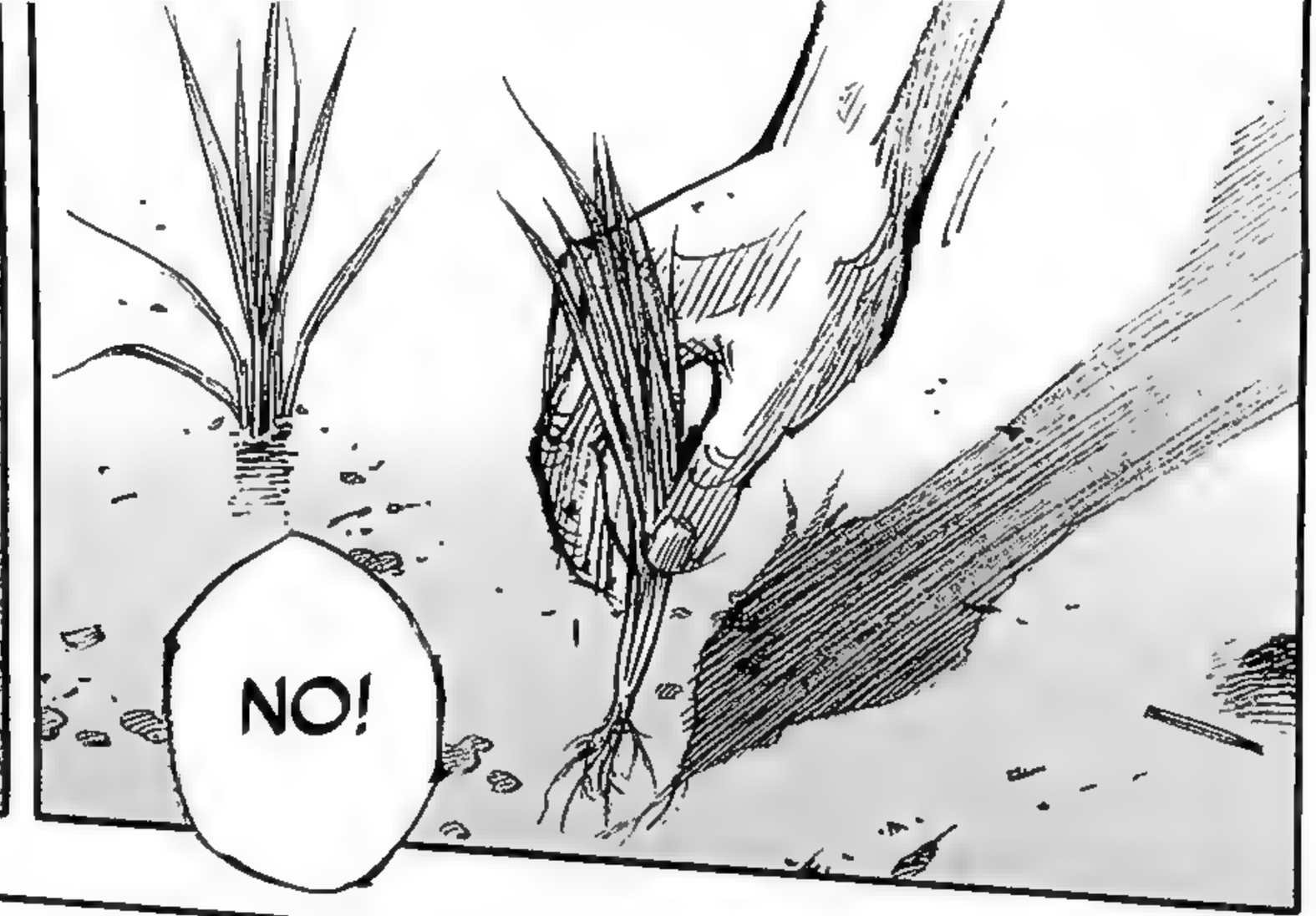


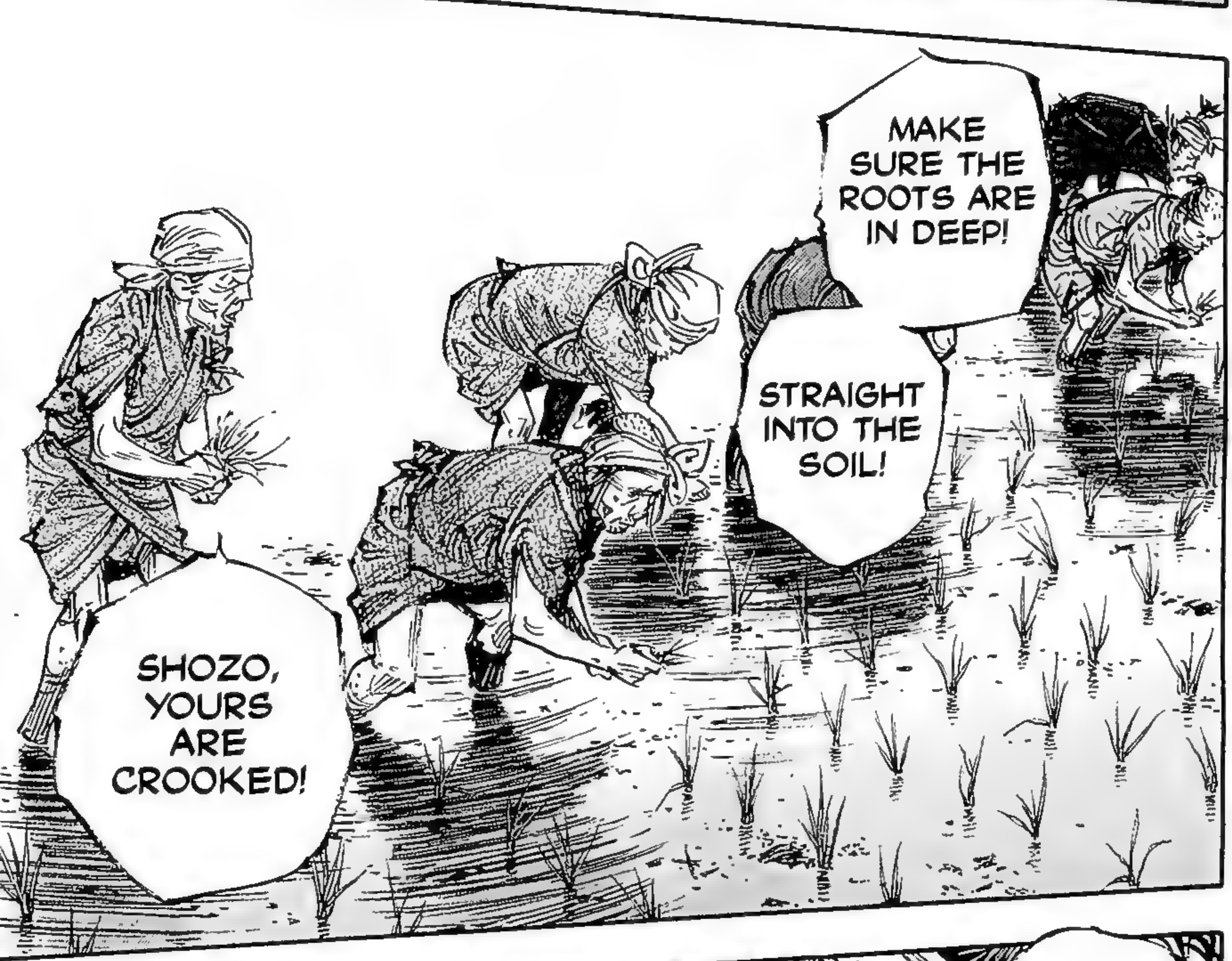
EVERYONE HERE?


!!

HERE WE GO!
YEAH!

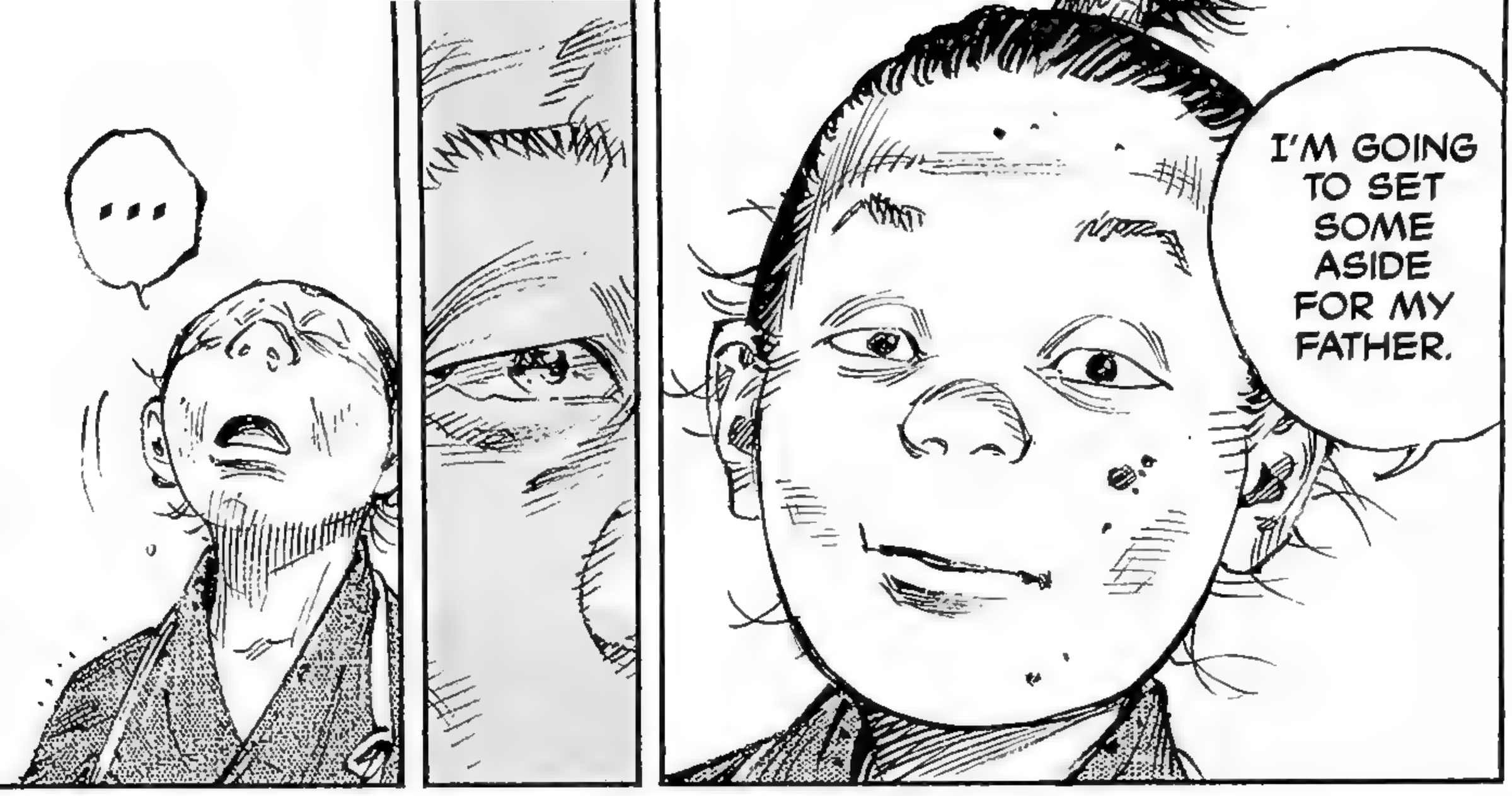
USE YOUR WRIST!
LIKE THIS!


NO!


MAKE SURE THE ROOTS ARE IN DEEP!
STRAIGHT INTO THE SOIL!
SHOZO, YOURS ARE CROOKED!

NO, NO! NOT LIKE THAT, MUSASHI!
!

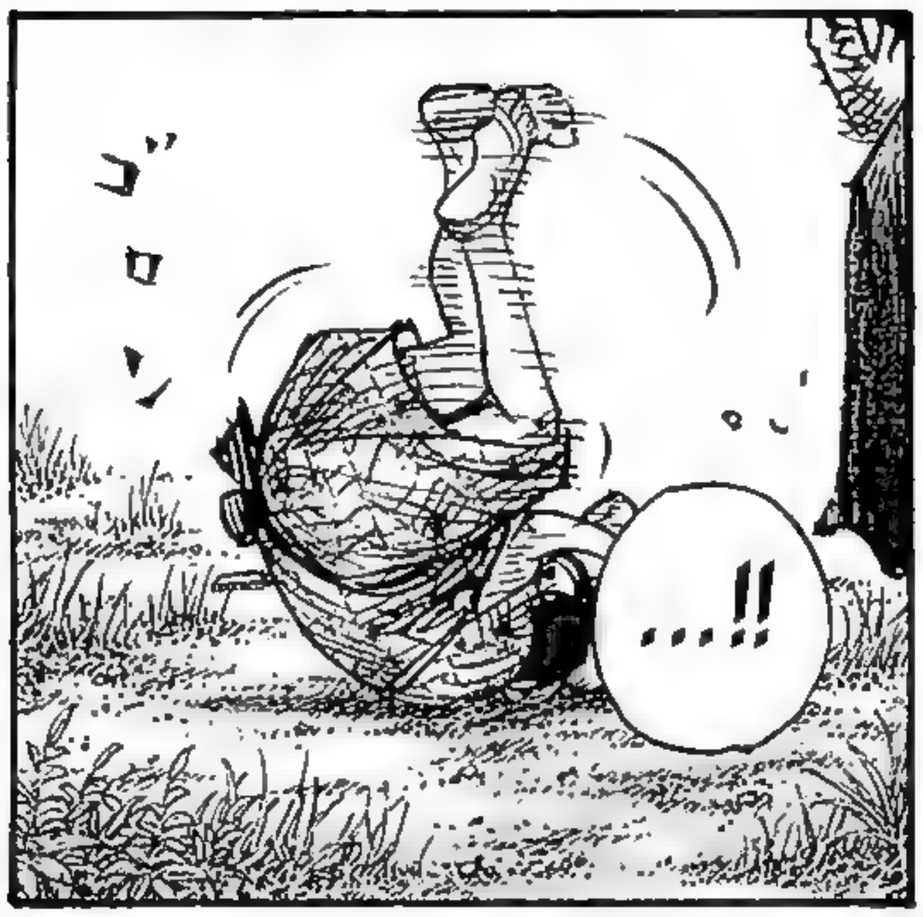
IF WE DO MANAGE...
...TO HARVEST RICE...

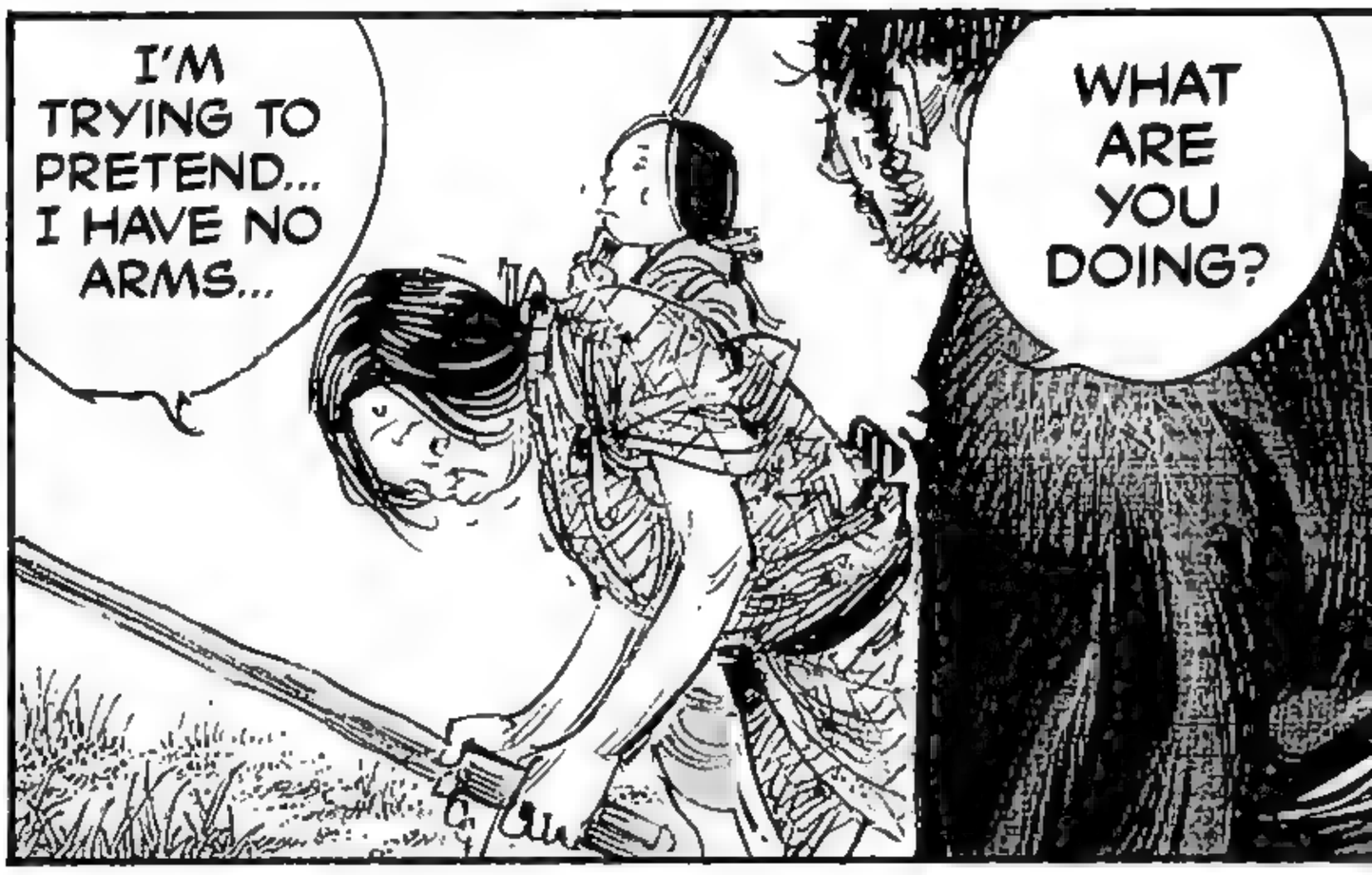

...
I'M GOING TO SET SOME ASIDE FOR MY FATHER.

...

#319 Frail

...
...

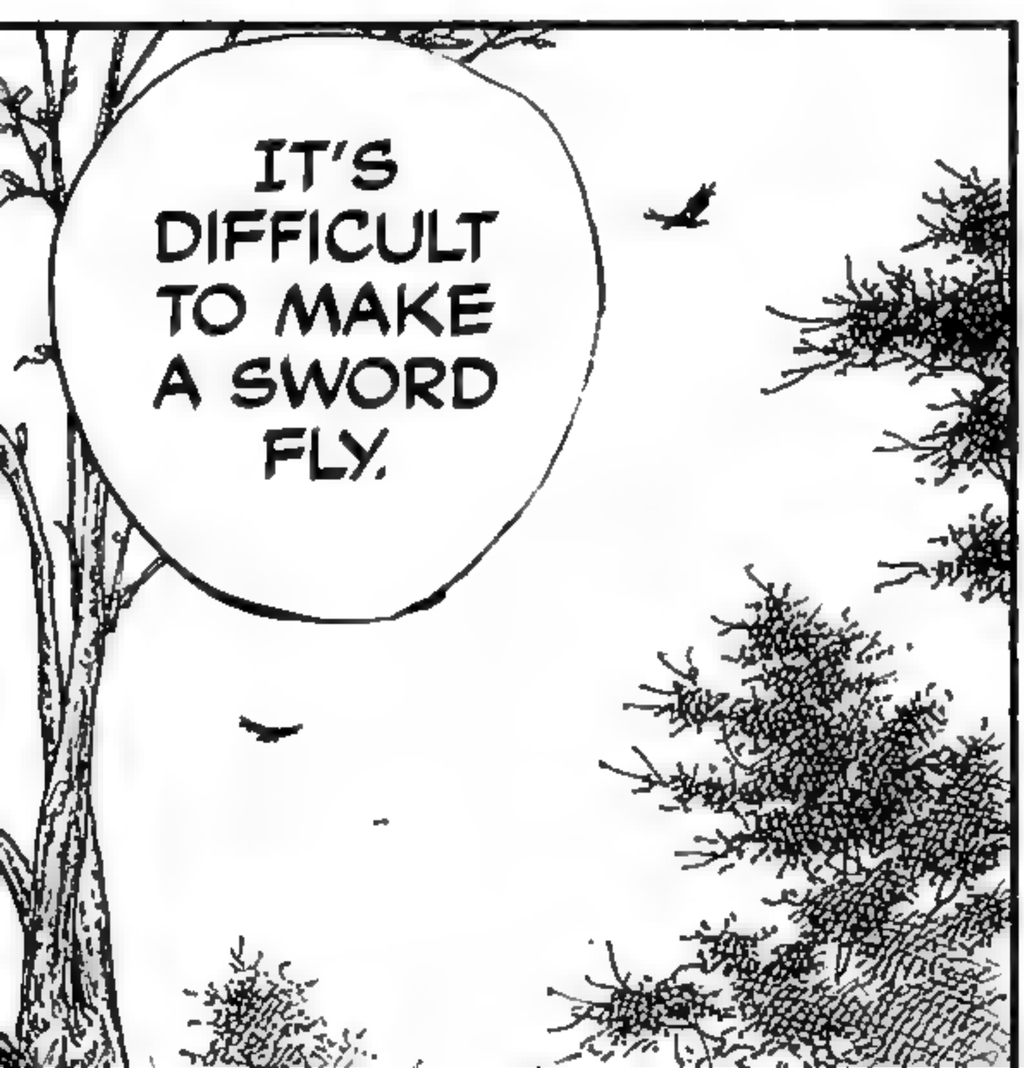

...!!


I'M TRYING TO PRETEND... I HAVE NO ARMS...
WHAT ARE YOU DOING?

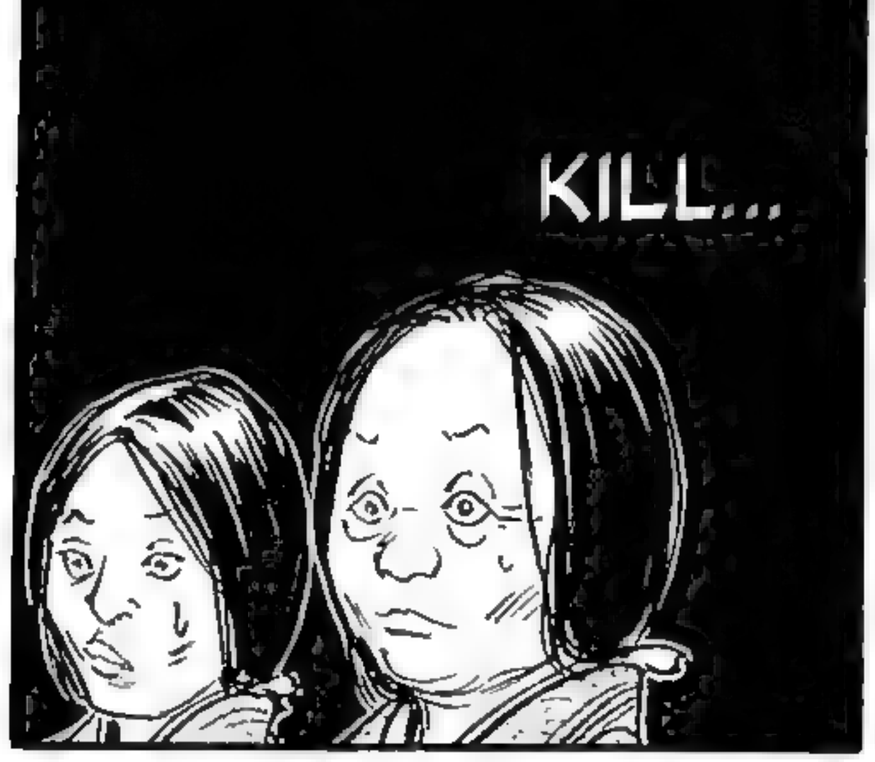
!

...

OH!
!!


IT'S DIFFICULT TO MAKE A SWORD FLY.

I'M SO SORRY!
AMAZ-ING.

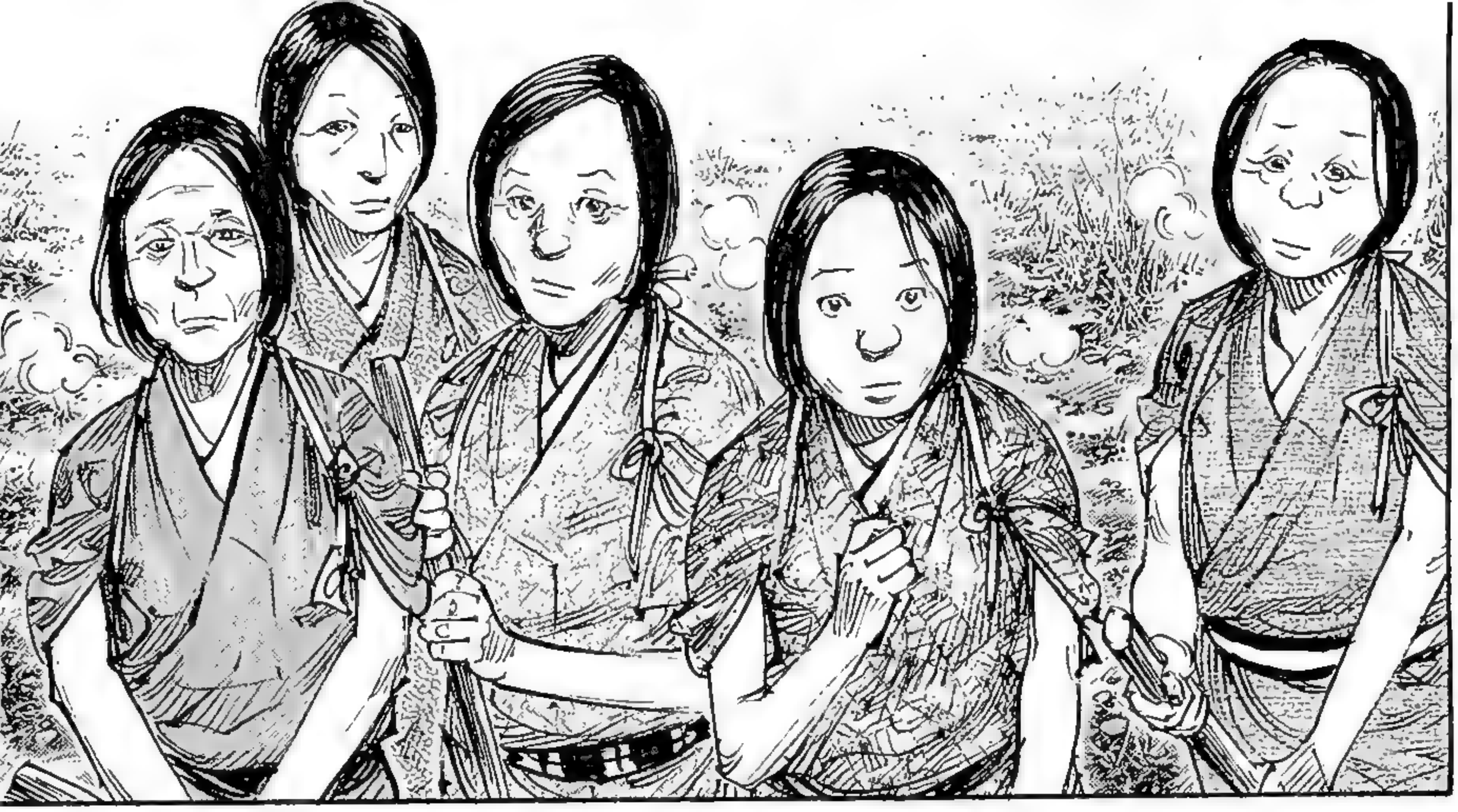

KILL...

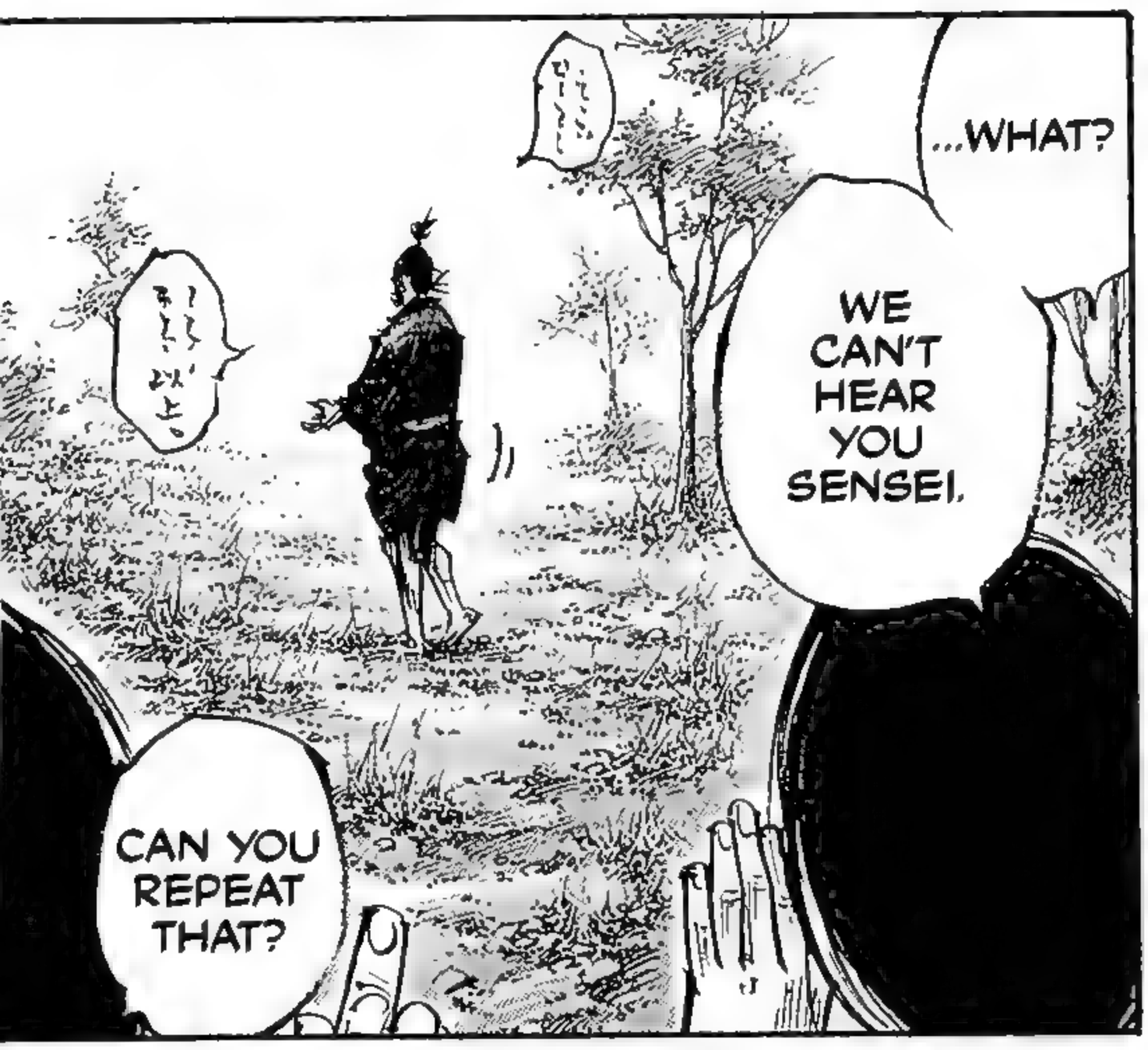
SO YOU HOLD IT TIGHTER STILL.
BUT THE STRENGTH YOU USE FOR THAT...

...SO YOU HOLD IT TIGHT...
IT'S NOT A PART OF YOU...
WHAT YOU HOLD IN YOUR HANDS CAN KILL.

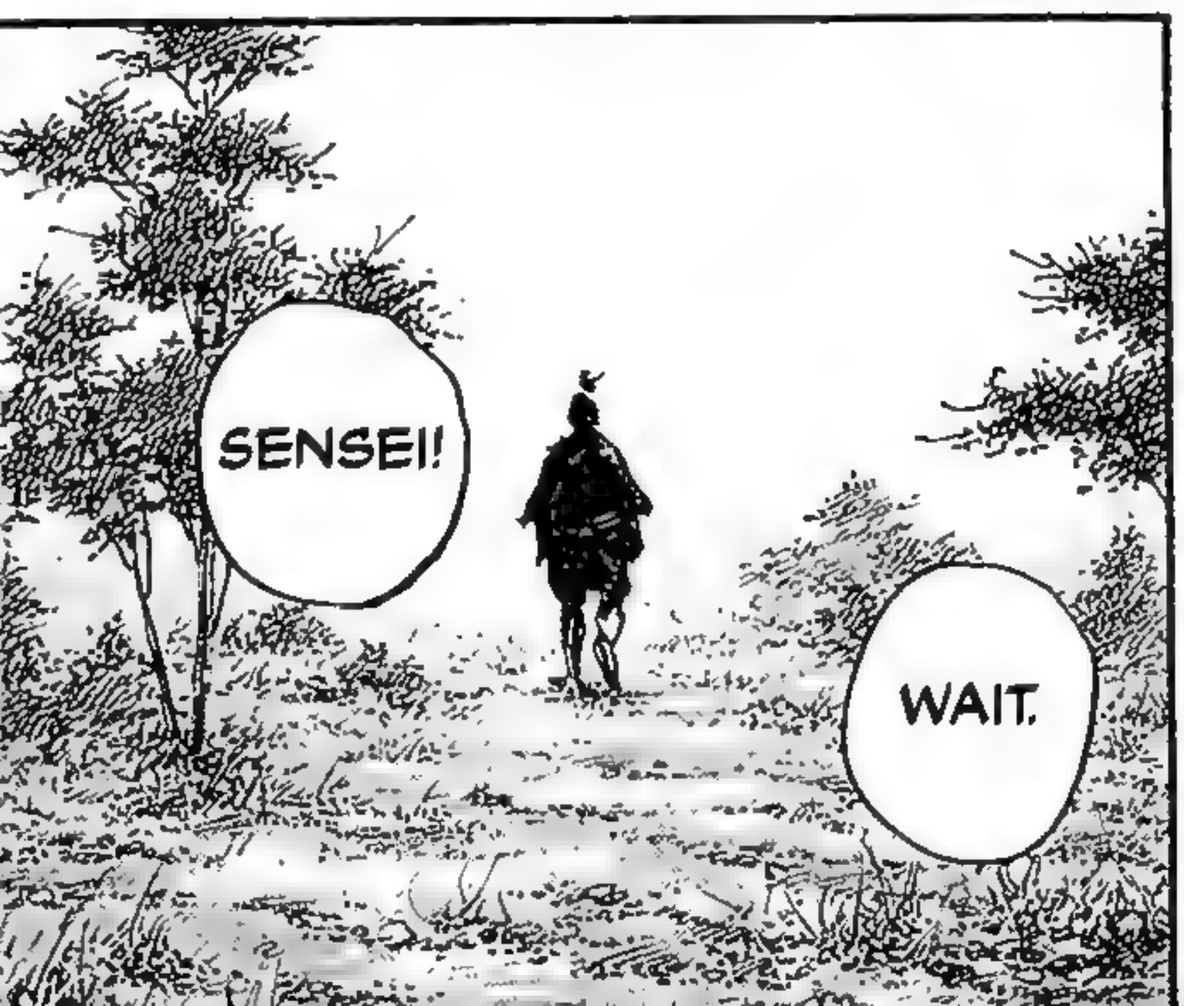
...ENDS UP RESTRICTING YOU.

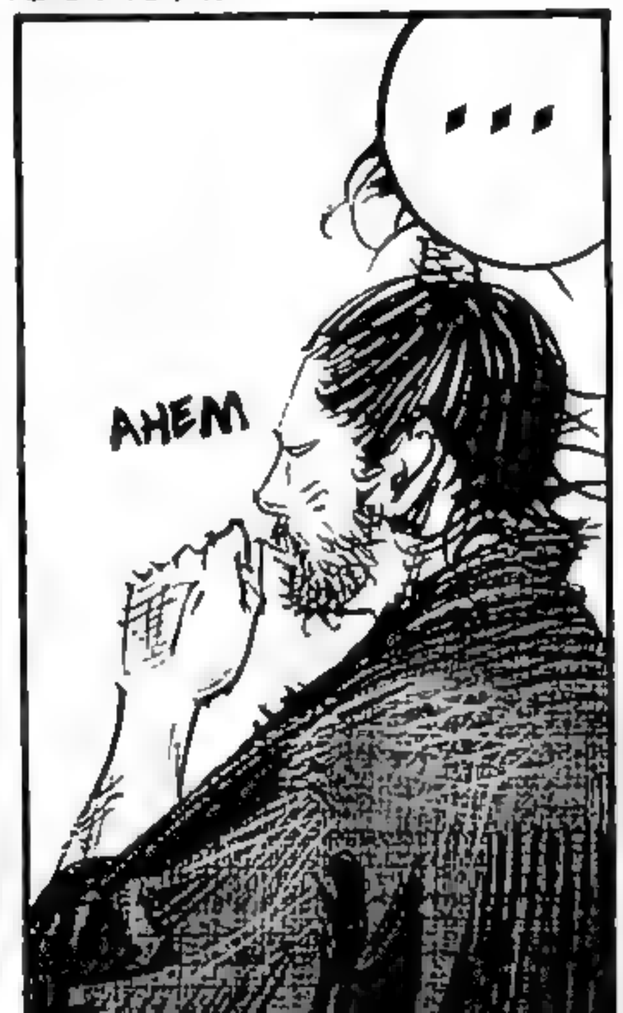
...





*NOTEBOOK: ALL ABOUT ABOUT MUSASHI





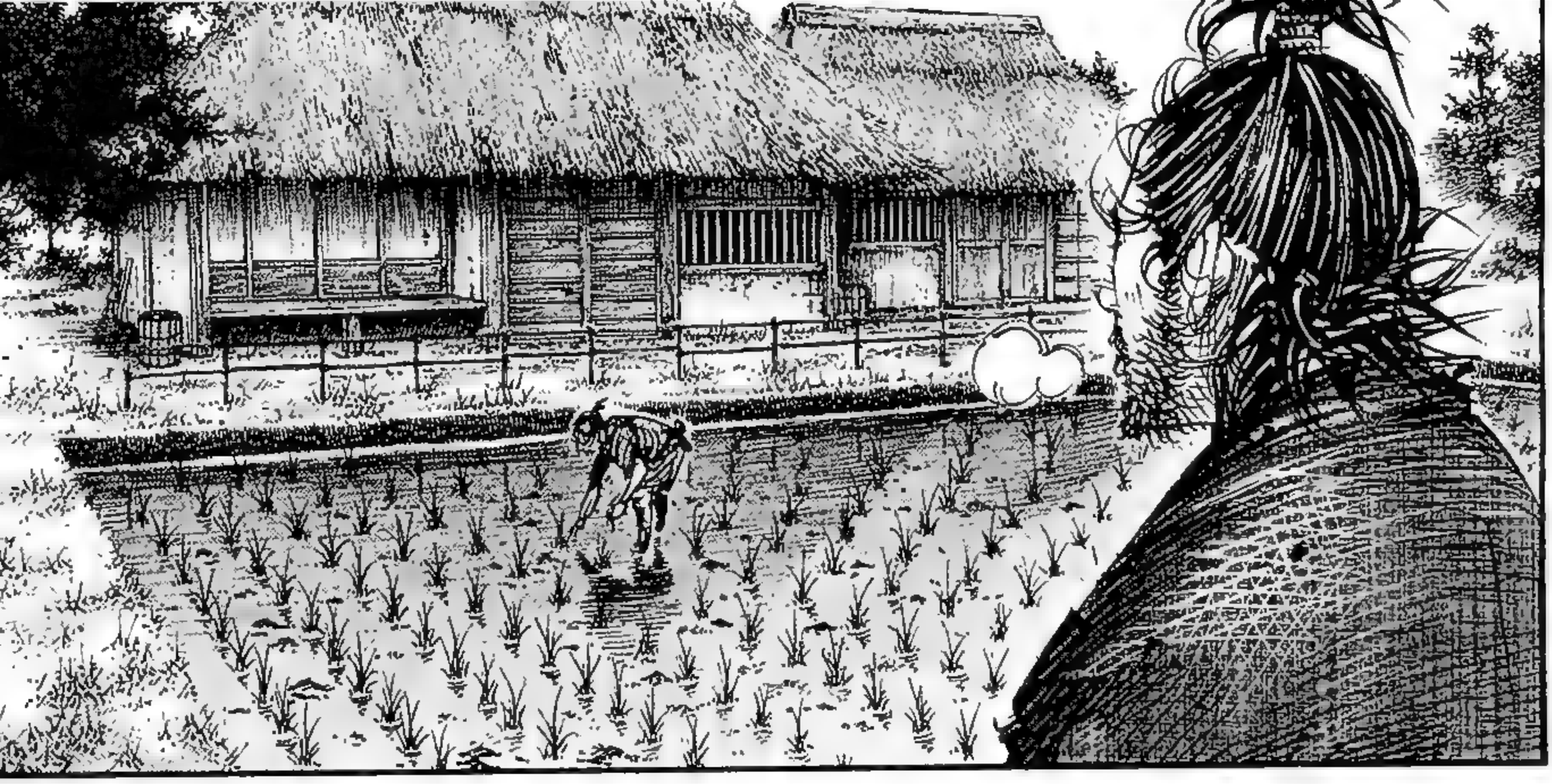
HMMM...

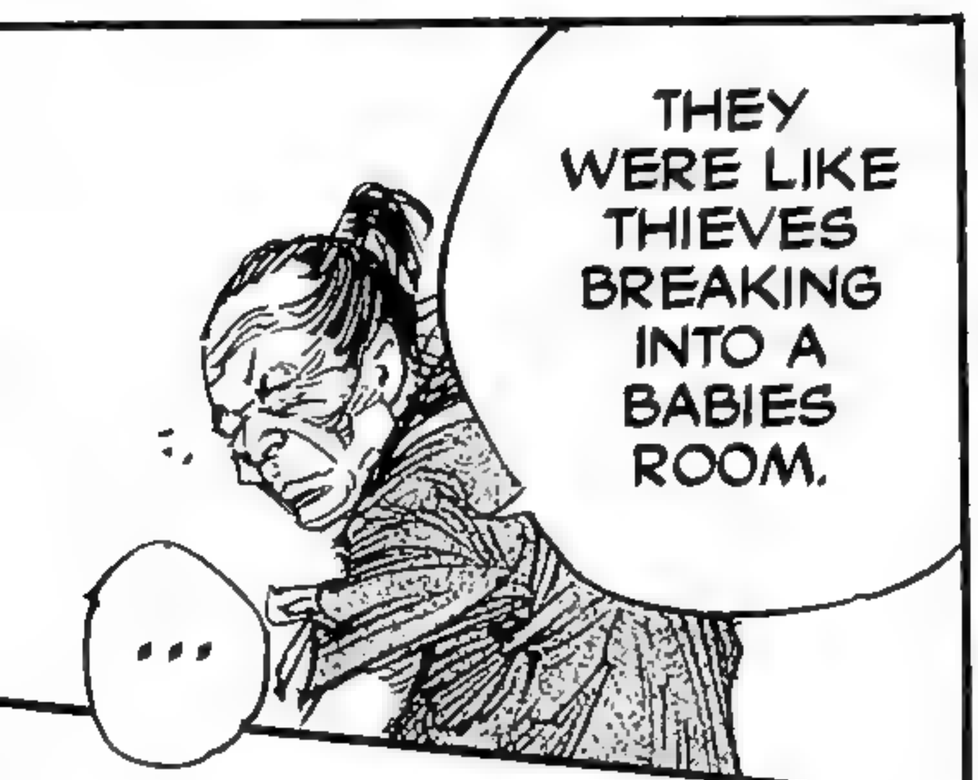
I HAVEN'T NOTICED ANY CHANGES OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS.
ARE THEY REALLY GROWING?

NOTH-ING'S CHANGED.
YOU WENT YESTERDAY.

I'M GOING TO CHECK ON SHUSAKU'S FIELD.
AGAIN?

...

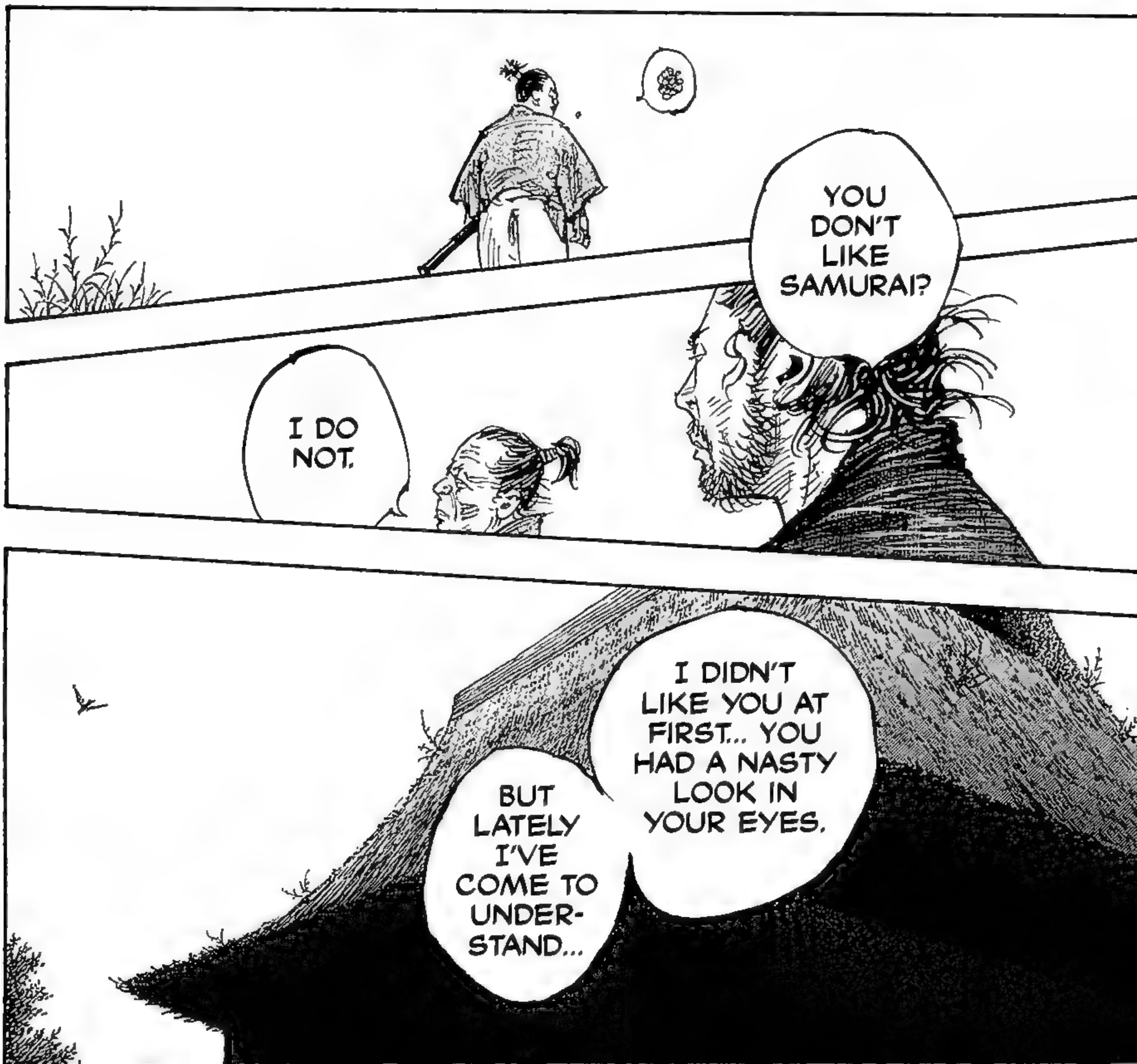



THEY WERE LIKE THIEVES BREAKING INTO A BABIES ROOM.
...

LOOK AT THESE WEEDS...
THEY'LL TAKE OVER IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL.
HAVE YOU BEEN PULLING OUT THE WEEDS IN YOUR FIELD?
THEY GROW MUCH FASTER THAN THE RICE PLANTS... AND BLOCK THE SUN FROM THEM.

YOU WOULDN'T UNDER-STAND SWORDS-MAN
THAT'S RIGHT.
GO AWAY.

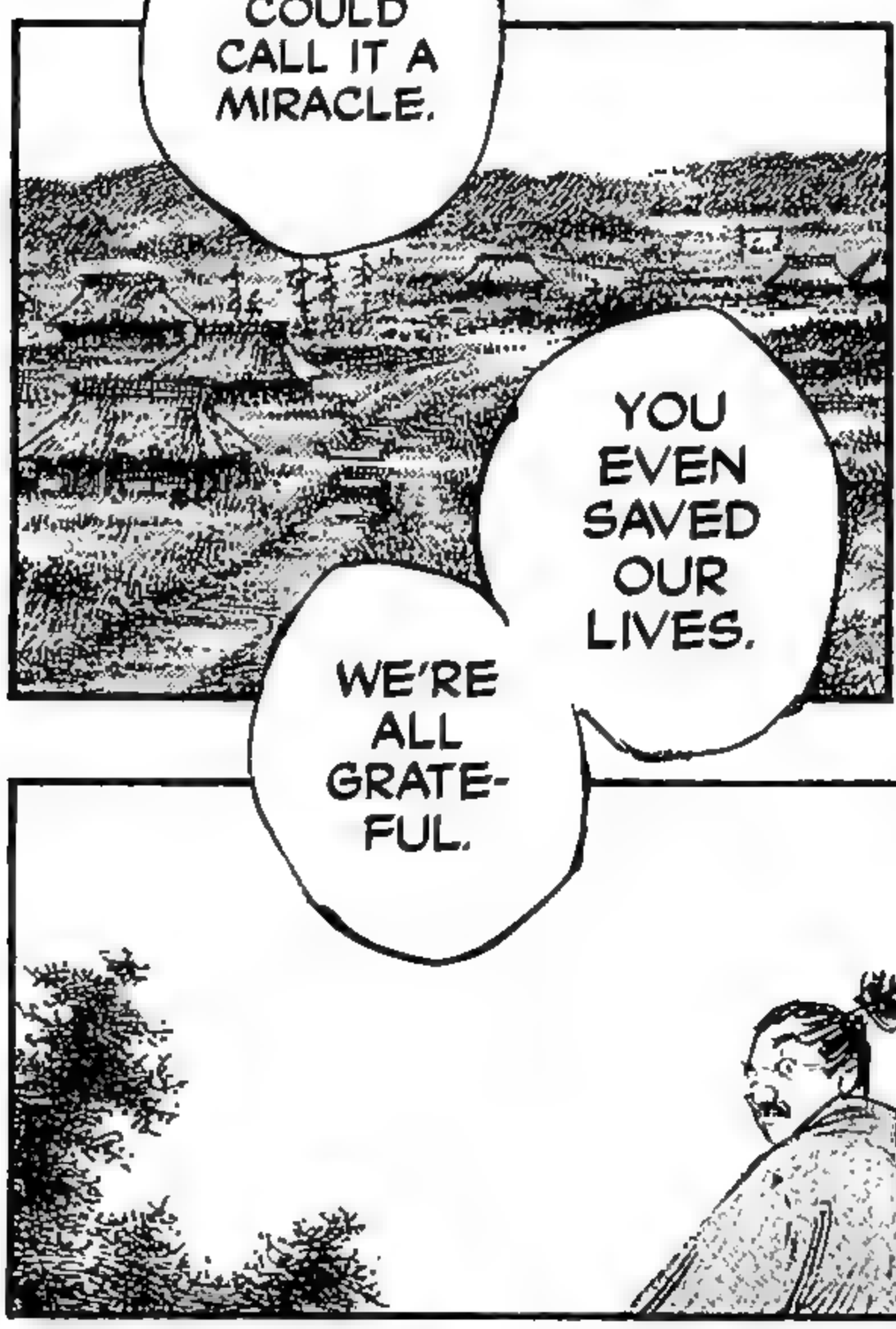
SO YOU'RE SAYING THIS RICE RESEMBLES A CHILD.


YOU DON'T LIKE SAMURAI?
I DO NOT.
I DIDN'T LIKE YOU AT FIRST... YOU HAD A NASTY LOOK IN YOUR EYES.
BUT LATELY I'VE COME TO UNDER-STAND...

EVEN MUSASHI'S HUMAN...
JUST LIKE US.
SO LET ME SAY THIS.
...
YOU'VE DONE ENOUGH.
YOU SHOULD LEAVE.

THE VILLAGE HAS CHANGED THANKS TO YOU.

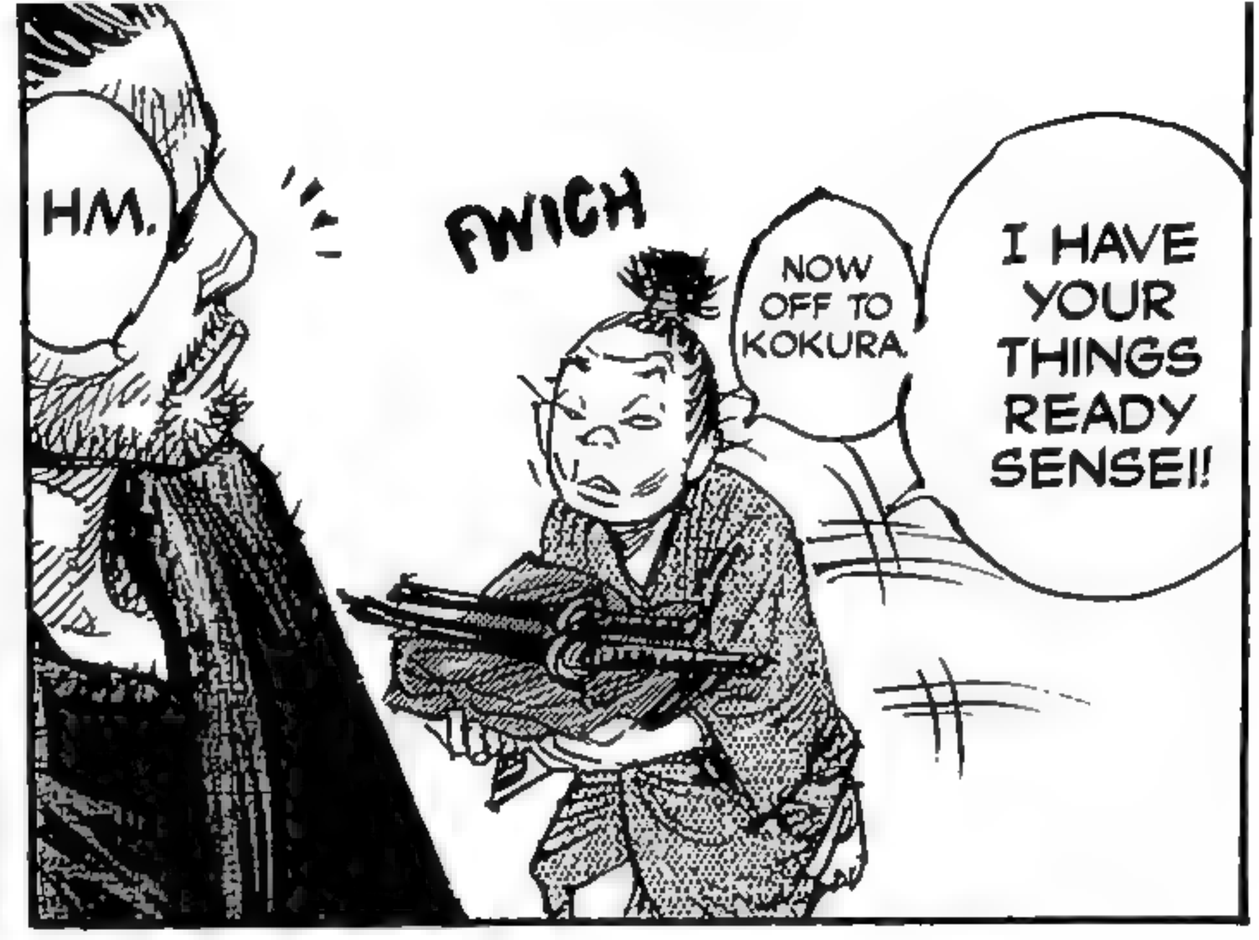
!


YOU COULD CALL IT A MIRACLE.
YOU EVEN SAVED OUR LIVES.
WE'RE ALL GRATE-FUL.

YOU SHOULD LEAVE.
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD.
HUH?
TP TP TP
MAKES ME MAD WHEN YOU SAY IT LIKE THAT.

WE JUST STARTED PLANTING.
WE'VE ONLY BEGUN...
NO, THAT'S ENOUGH.

...

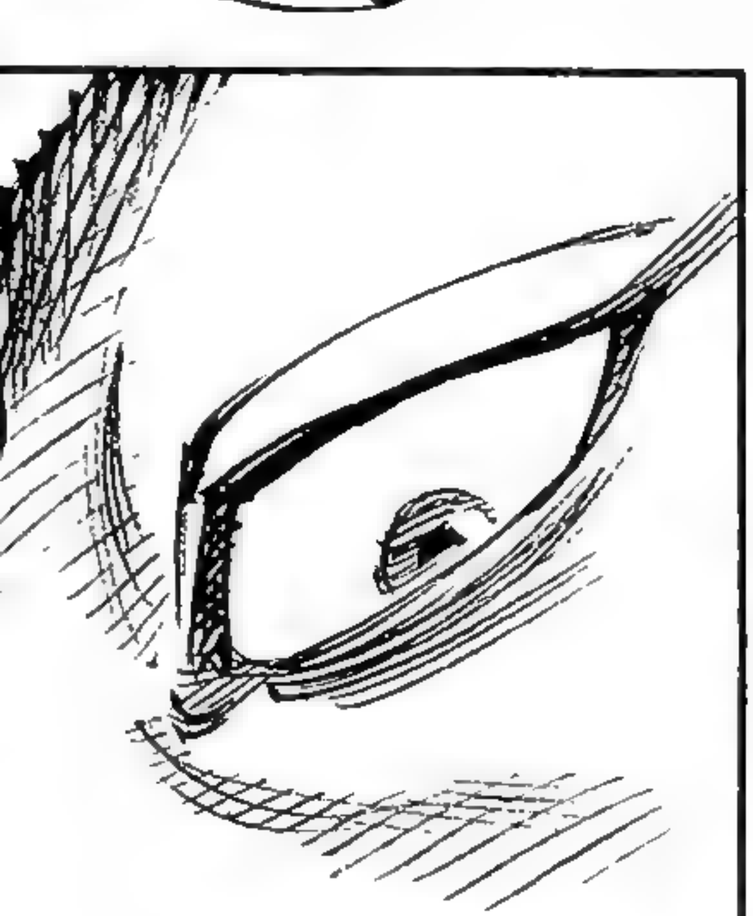

HM.
FWICH
NOW OFF TO KOKURA.
I HAVE YOUR THINGS READY SENSEI!

I NEVER KNOW WHAT WILL HAPPEN BEFORE HARVEST. I'M NOT LEAVING.
HM?
YOU SAID THE RICE PLANT IS WEAK, SHUSAKU.
AND NOW YOU'RE TELLING ME TO ABANDON IT?
THAT'S RIGHT.
THAT'S EXACTLY WHY.

WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW ABOUT BEING WEAK?

THE "INVINCIBLE" MUSASHI...
YOU'VE LIVED IN A WORLD WHERE NO ONE IS MIGHTIER THAN YOU...
WHAT?

WELL...
YOU MUST HAVE BEEN SURROUNDED BY PLENTY OF WEAK MEN.
MANY THAT WERE...

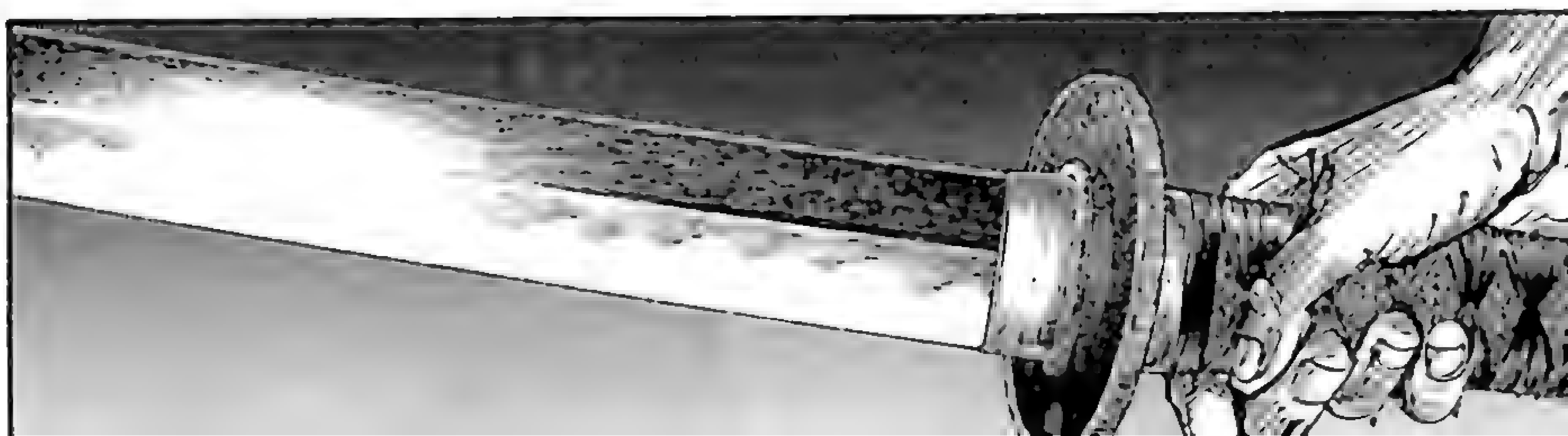


LOOK DOWN.
YOU DON'T SEE IT.

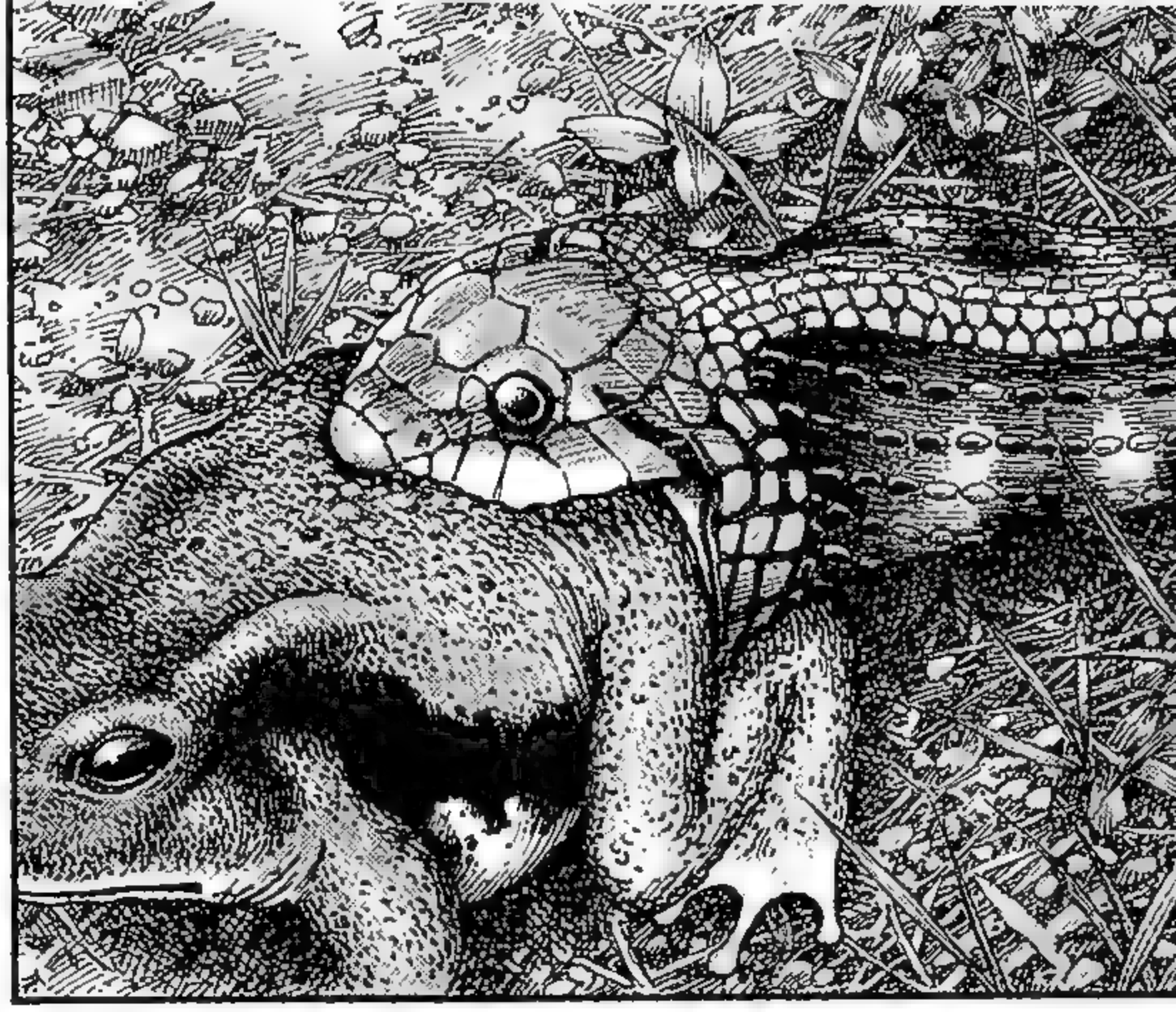
YOU DON'T SEE THE WEAK.

GO AWAY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.

I DON'T UNDERSTAND.

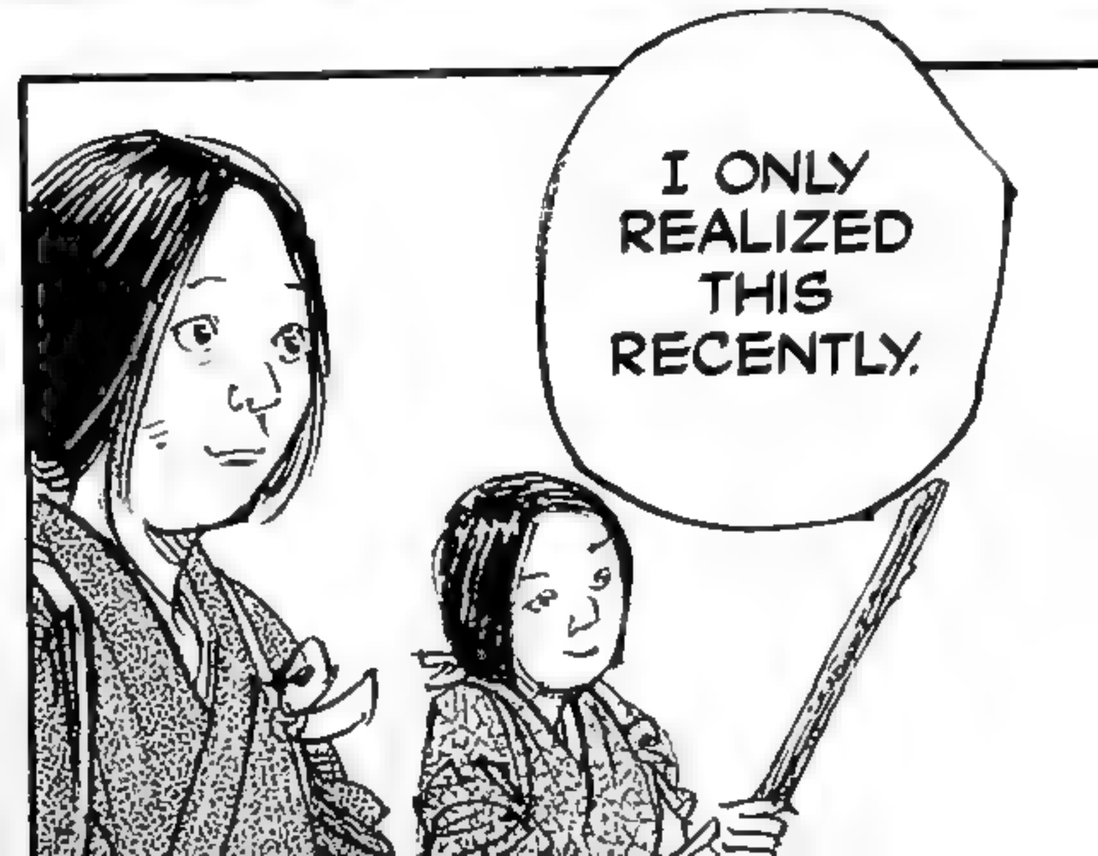


WOW!



WITHOUT MY LEGS, I ENDED UP RELYING TOO MUCH ON MY ARMS...
...MY BODY WOULDN'T RESPOND.
AFTER MY LEGS WERE INJURED...

BUT IF YOU RELY TOO MUCH ON THEM...
THE ARMS ARE HARD WORKERS.


I ONLY REALIZED THIS RECENTLY.

SO SOMETIMES IT'S GOOD TO SWING AS IF YOU HAVE NO ARMS.
OH, YES, BUT BEFORE THAT...
...BACK, OR BELLY BUTTON.
...YOUR LEGS, STOMACH ...
YOU END UP FORGET-TING ABOUT...
...LOOK UP AT THE SKY.
FSH
YOU SEE THE WINDS HAVE CHANGED.

FWOOSH

...I
DON'T
GET IT.

IN FACT...

BUT I HAVE NO CLUE WHAT HE'S REALLY GETTING AT.

I UNDERSTAND SOME OF THE THINGS HE SAYS.

...IF HE'S REALLY TALKING ABOUT SWORDSMANSHIP.

... I'M NOT EVEN SURE...

MUSASHI...

WHAT IS IT YOU SEE...?

WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING AT?

HMPH.

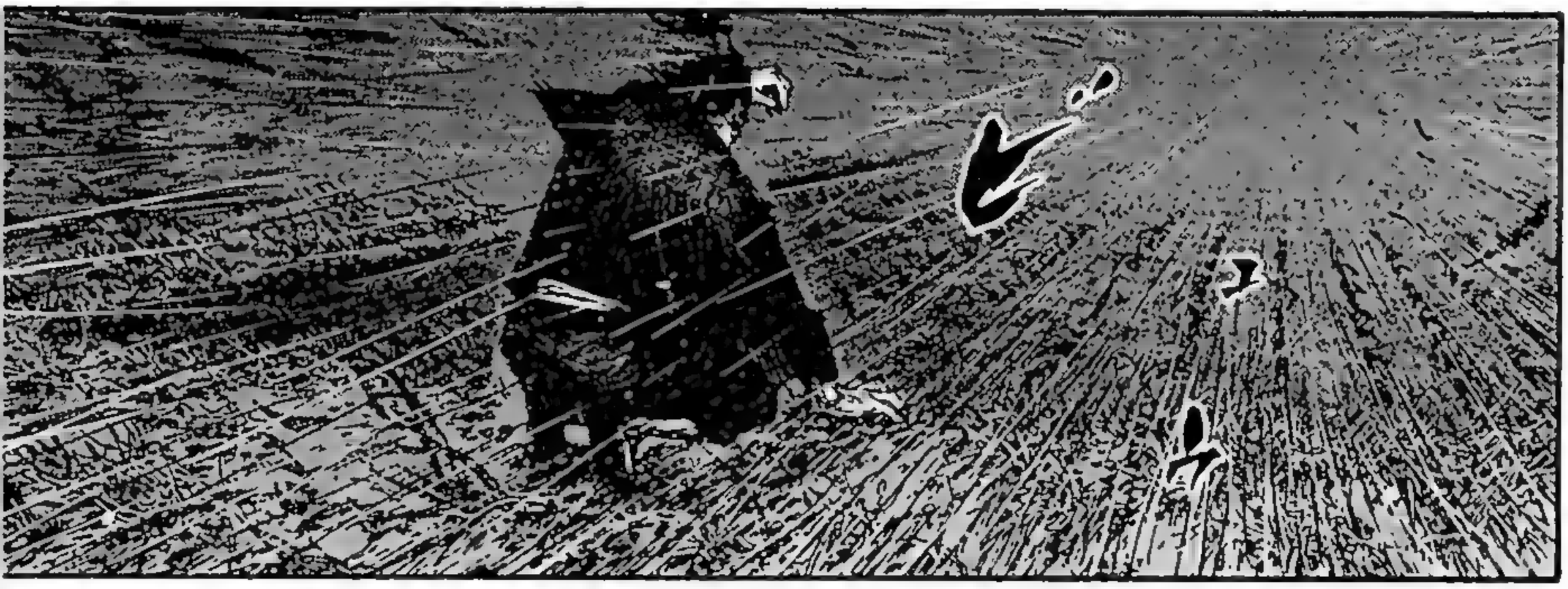
THE SUMMER WINDS...

#320 | Ridgeway

ゴ
...
PLEASE ...
IT'S COME.
STORM.

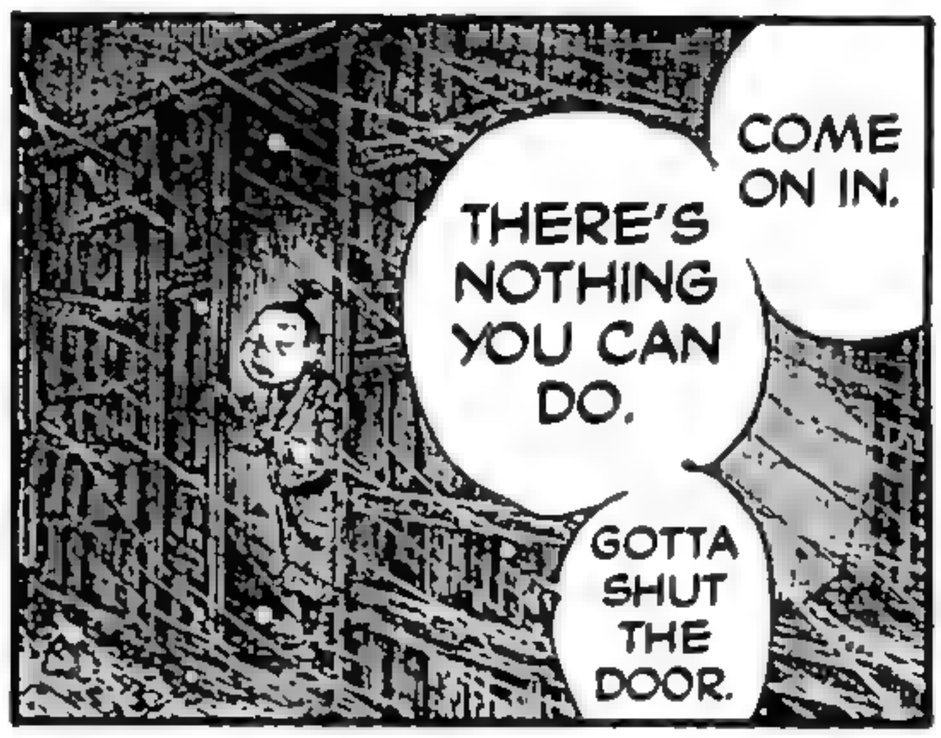
OH...

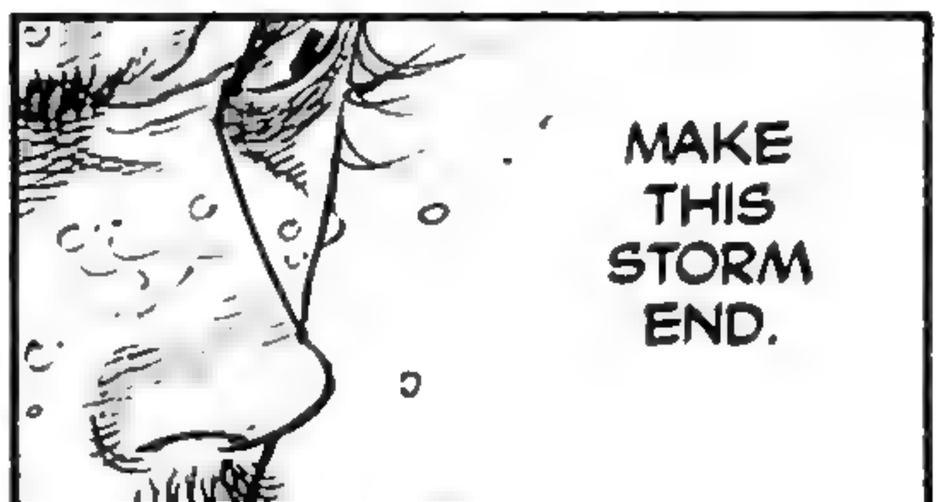
!

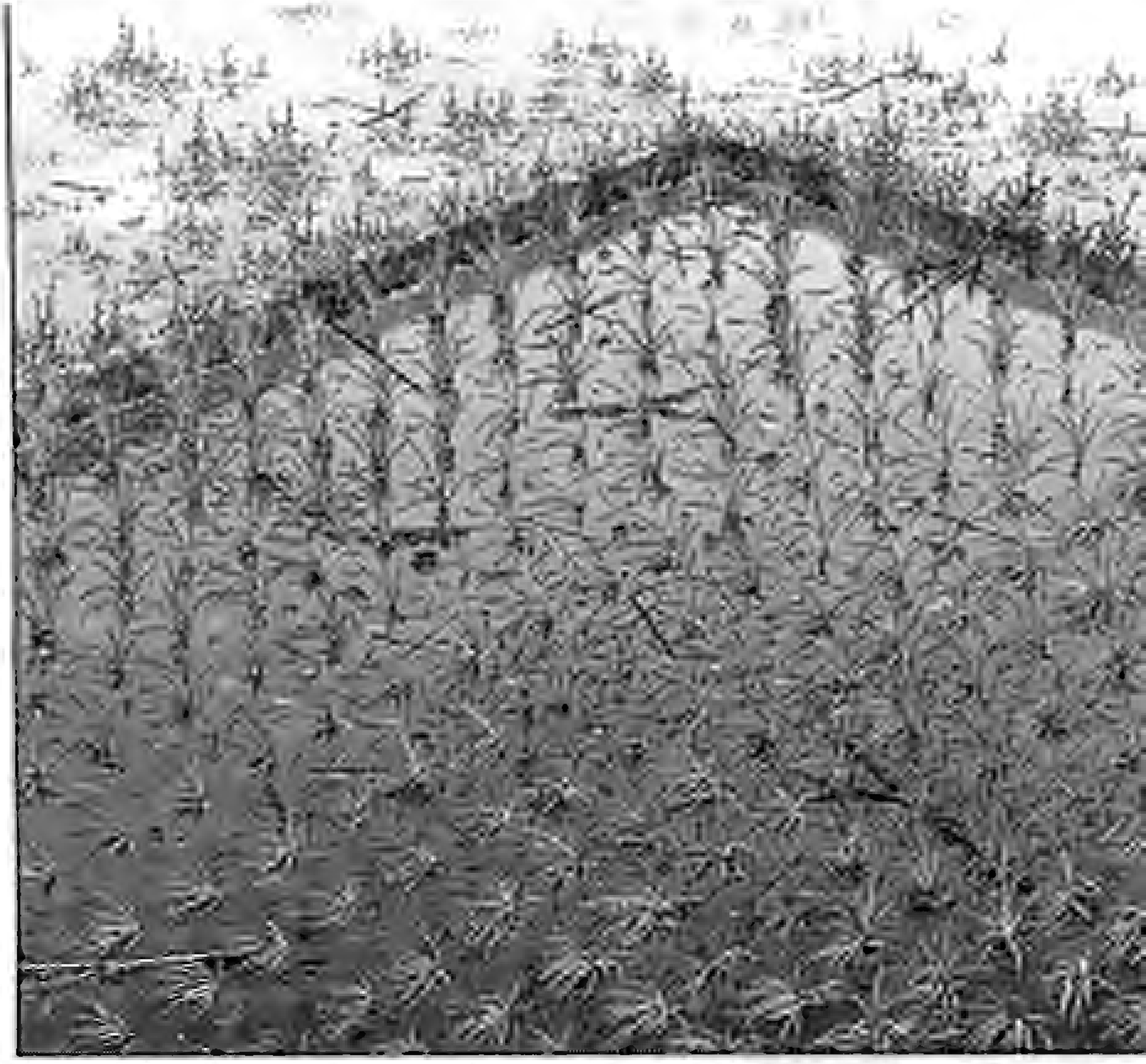


THEY ARE AS FRAIL AS BABIES.

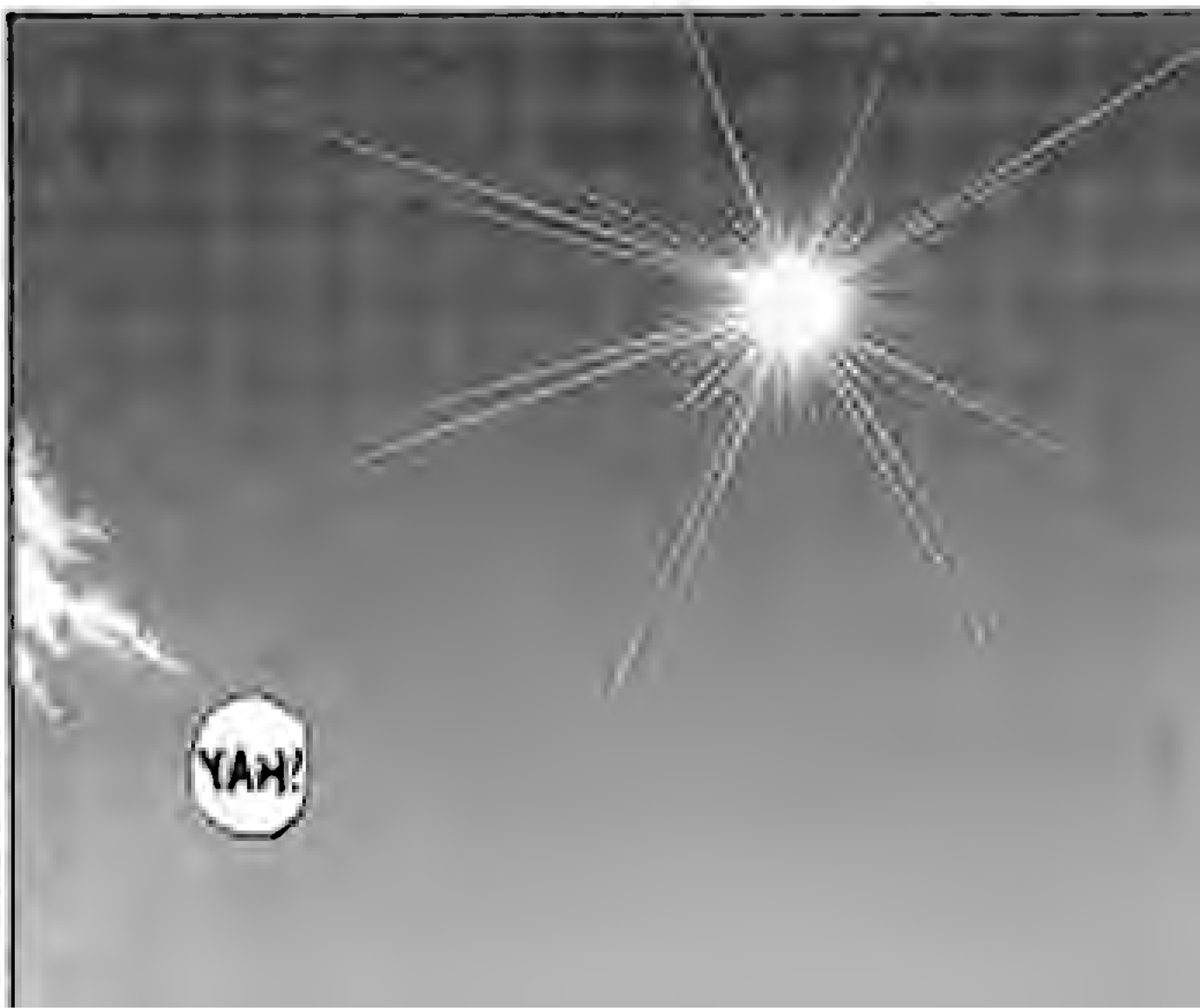
PLEASE HOLD OUT...
PLEASE.


COME ON IN.
THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO.
GOTTA SHUT THE DOOR.


MAKE THIS STORM END.



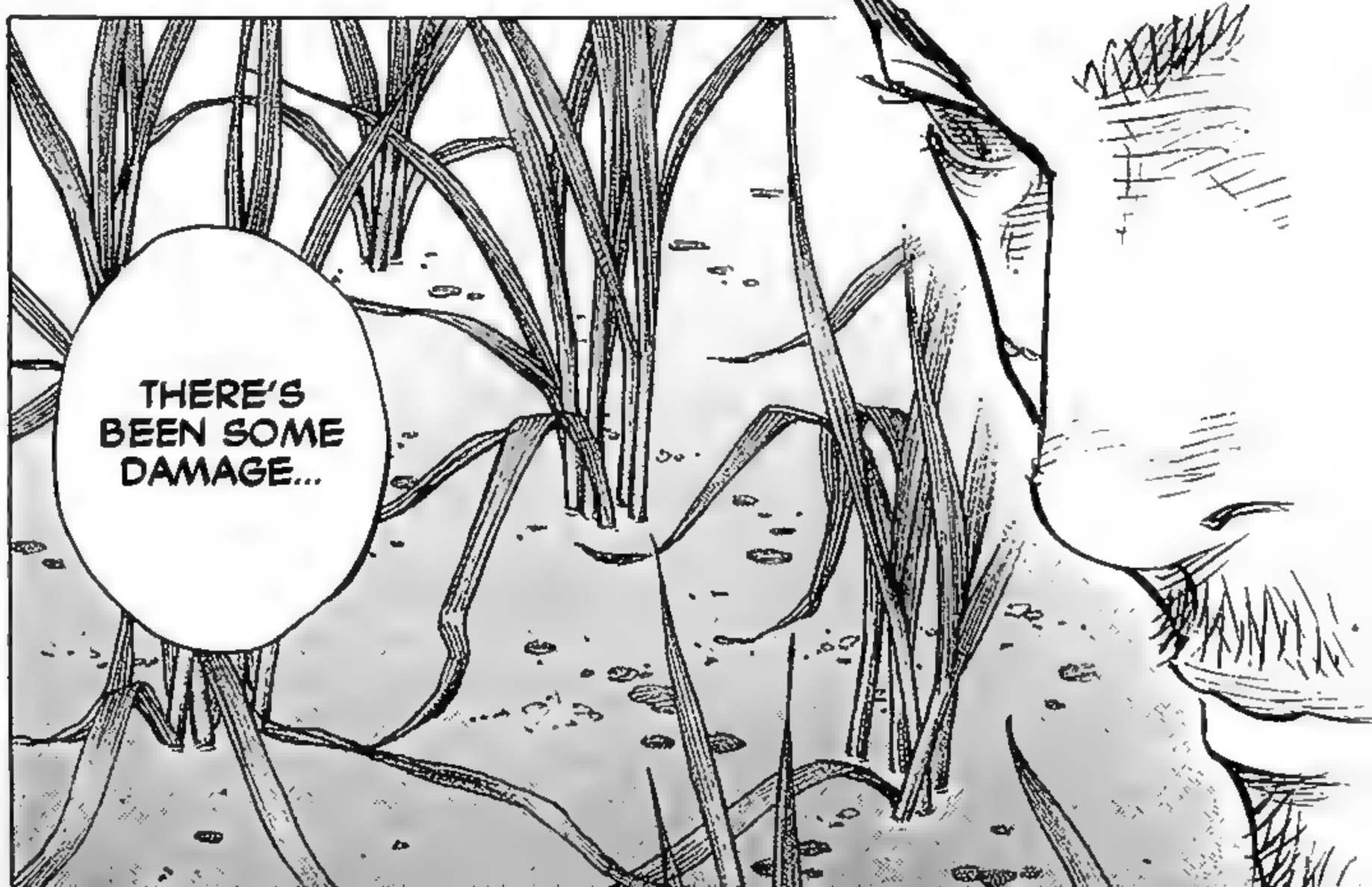
HAH!


YAH!

HAH!

YAHH!

...BUT FOR THE MOST PART, WE'RE GOOD.
THEY'LL STAND TALL AGAIN.


THERE'S BEEN SOME DAMAGE...

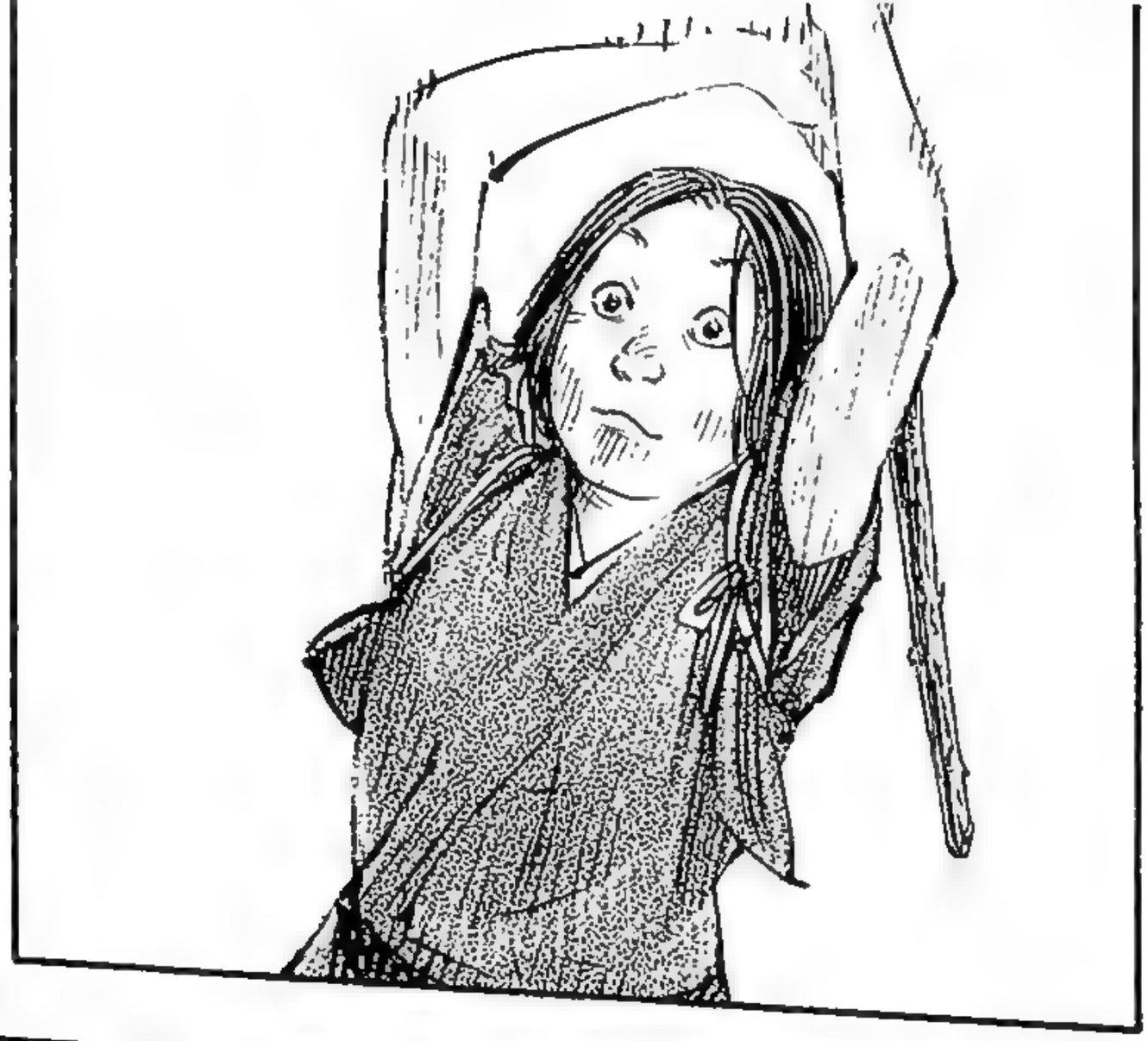
THEY GREW SLOWLY THIS TIME AROUND, AND THAT WORKED TO OUR ADVANTAGE.

THE CROP WASN'T TALL ENOUGH TO BE RUINED.

THIS ONE WAS WILTING FROM THE STORM, BUT NOW IT LOOKS FINE.

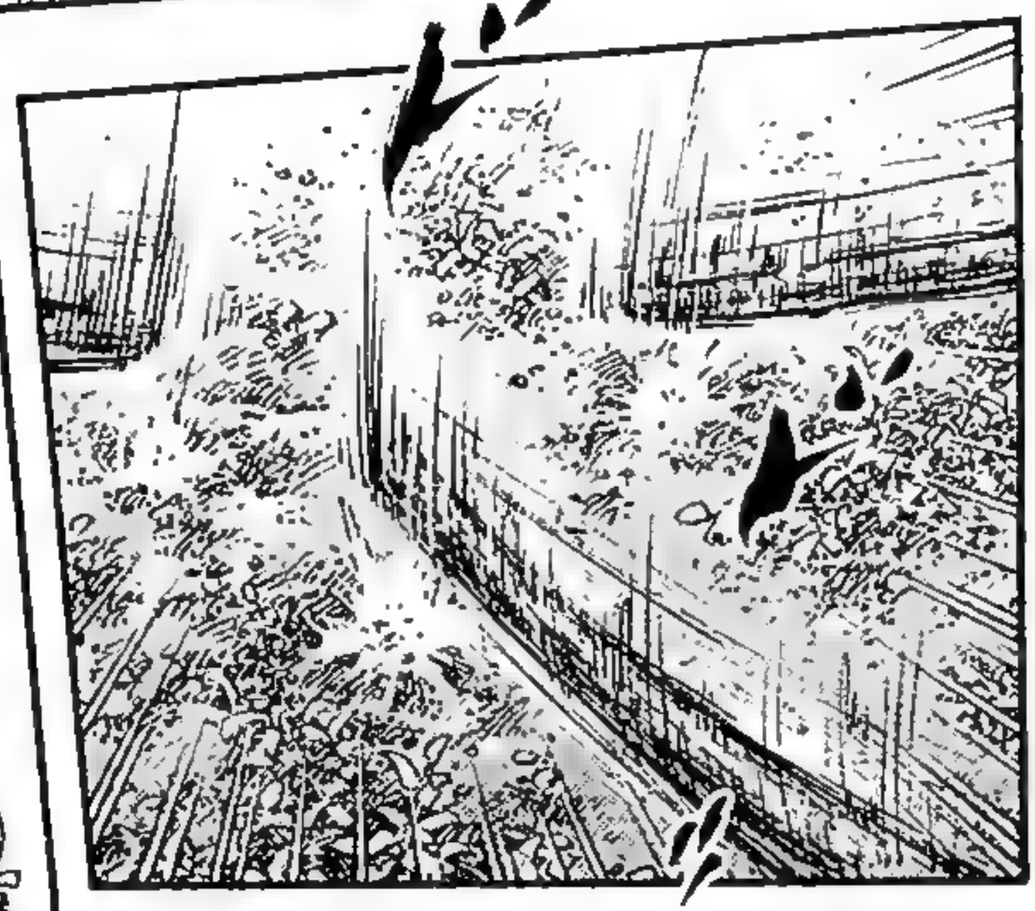
SO FRAIL AND YET...

...



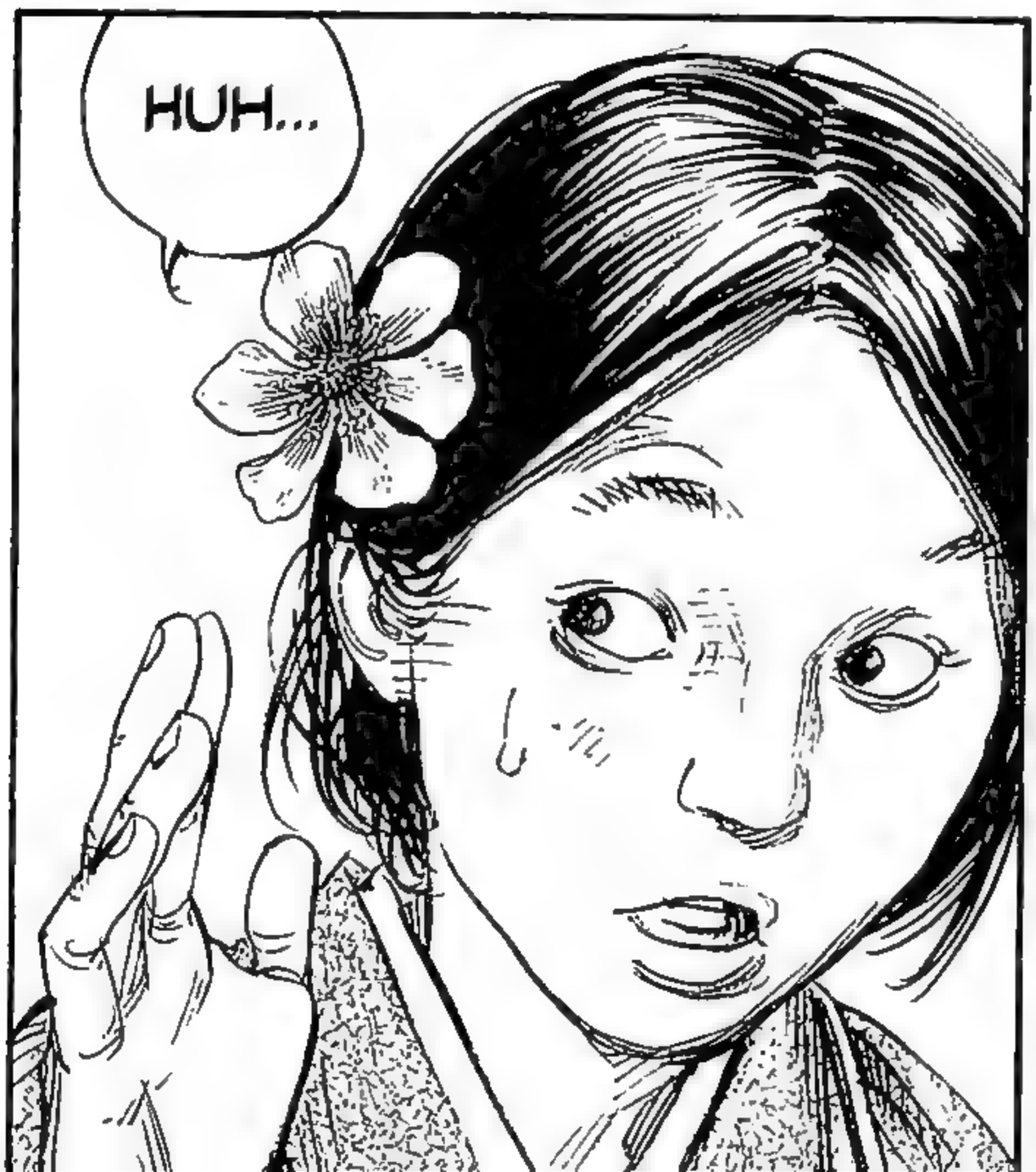
HAH!
YAH!

!



...IS RUN.
THE BEST THING YOU CAN DO WHEN OUTNUMBERED...
YOU WANT TO KNOW ABOUT FIGHTING AGAINST MANY?

YOU TAKE DOWN THE STRONGEST ONE FIRST.
...THEN GO AFTER ANYONE DISTINGUISHED.
IF THAT'S NOT POSSIBLE...


HUH...

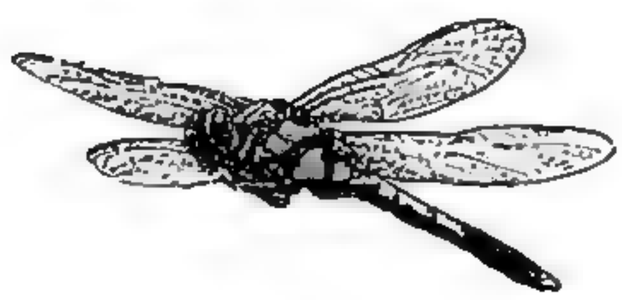
I SEE. YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT YOUR BATTLE AGAINST THE YOSHIOKA.

THEN EVERYONE ELSE WILL PANIC IN THE GROUP WILL FALL.

NOT MANY GROUPS ACTUALLY ACT IN UNISON.

...

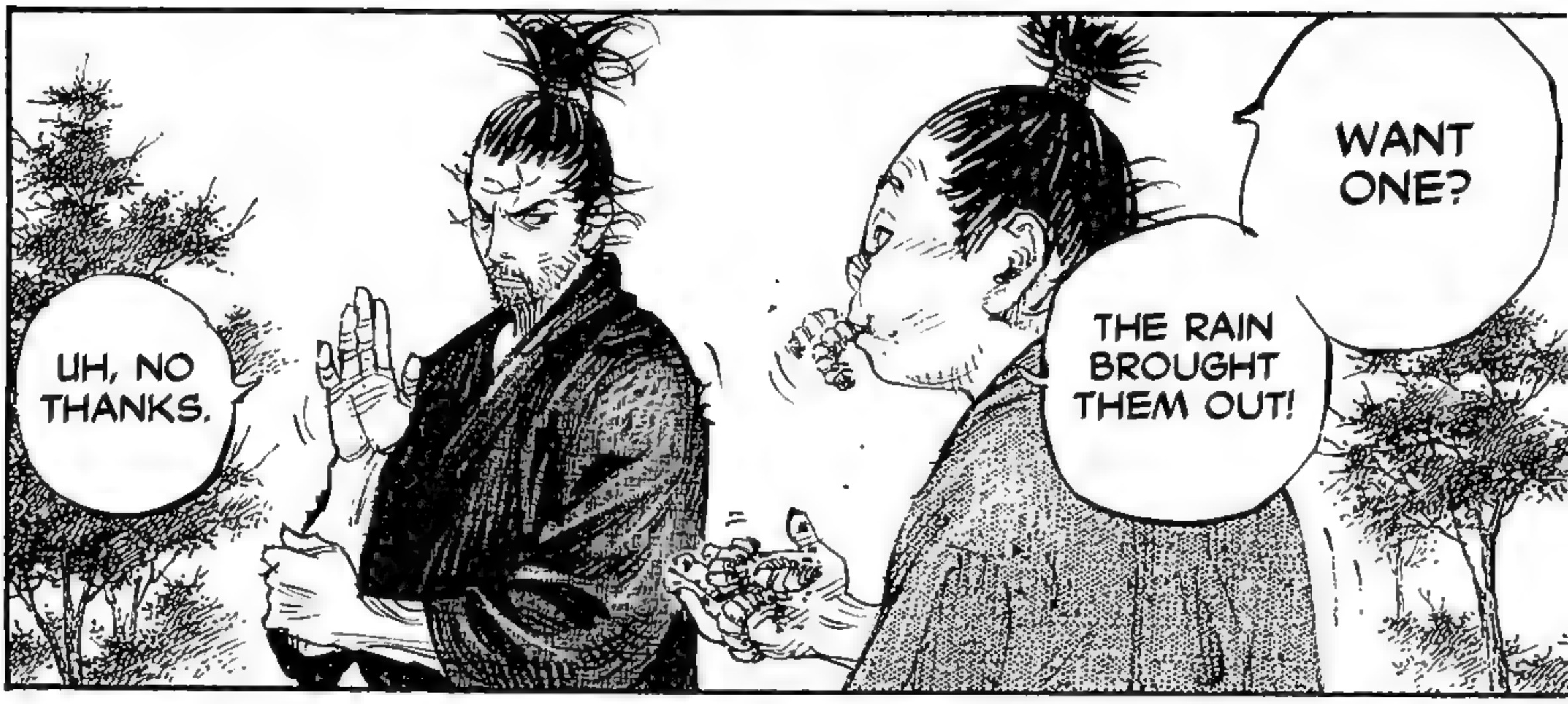
ONCE THE FORM IS BROKEN, IT IS DIFFICULT TO REGAIN UNITY.



IT'S HARD ENOUGH TO UNIFY ONE'S BODY...

YOUR ARMS MIGHT TAKE OVER... OR YOUR LEGS MAY BE TOO SLOW.

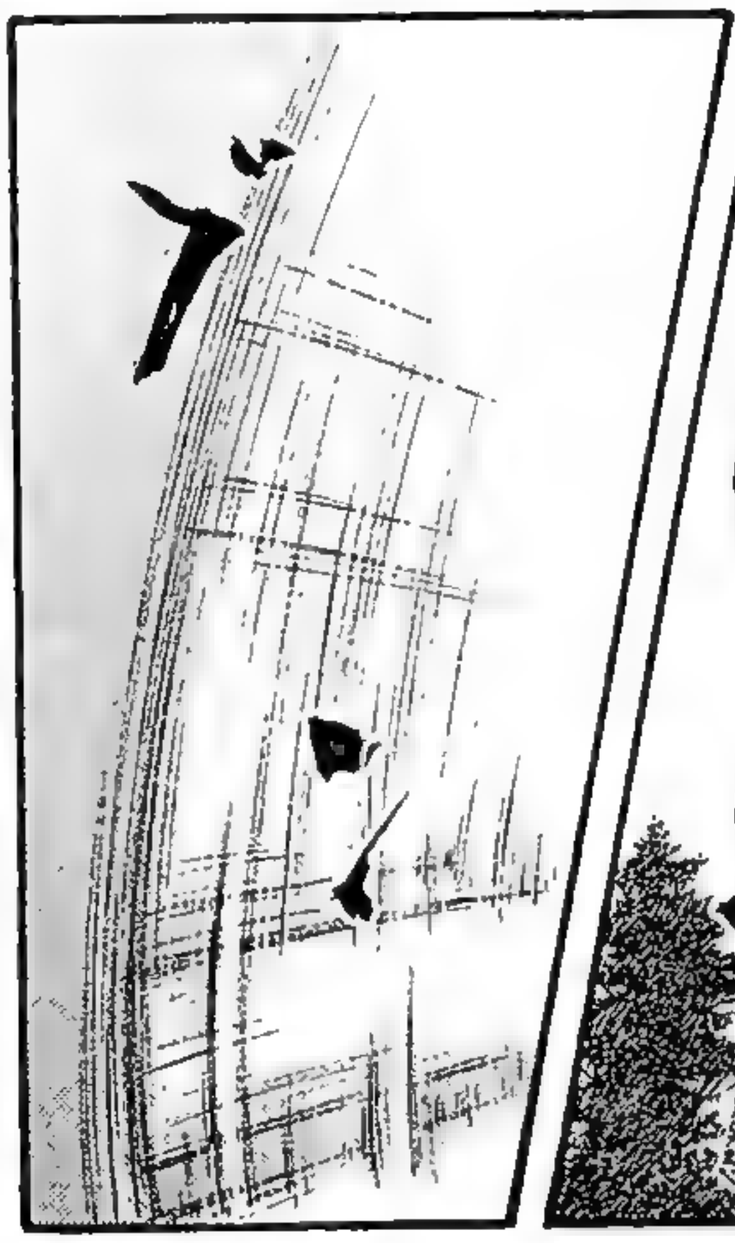
SENSEI!


UH, NO THANKS.
WANT ONE?
THE RAIN BROUGHT THEM OUT!

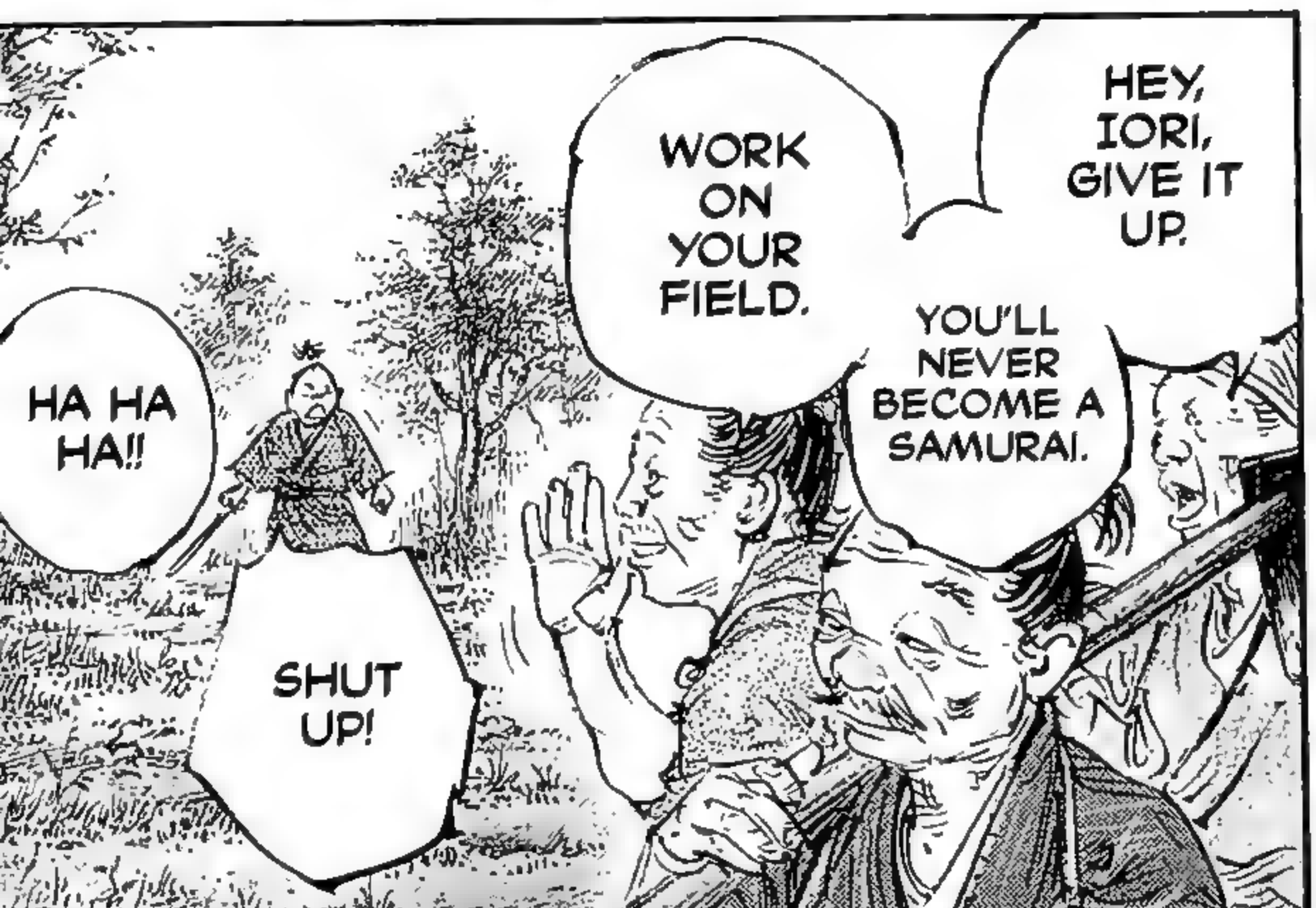
OWW!
OUCH! IT BIT ME!

HUH?

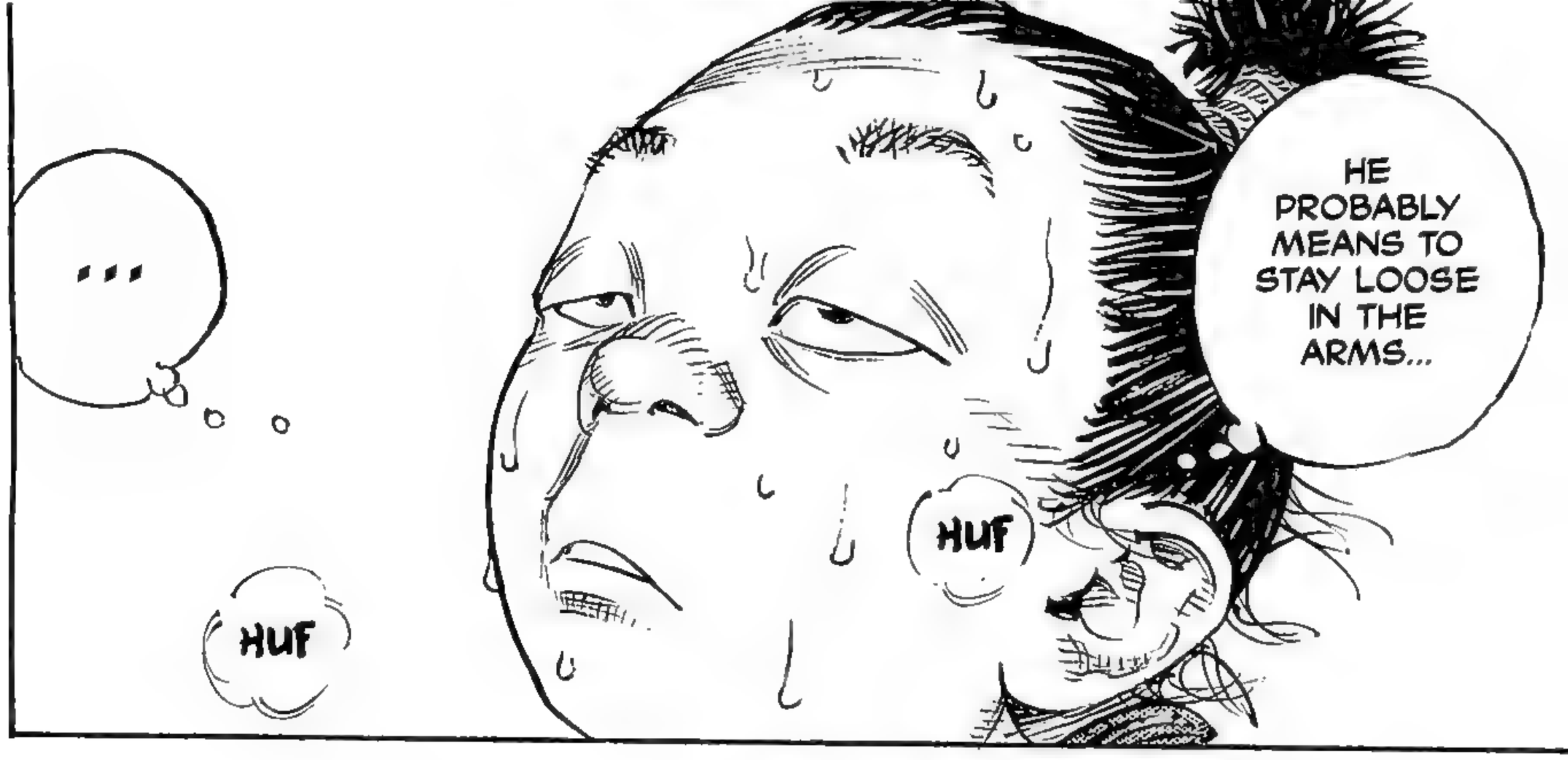
HE SAYS ALL THAT COMPLICATED STUFF TO THOSE WOMEN, BUT WITH ME HE ONLY GOES ON WITH NONSENSE.
I DON'T GET IT.
I'LL SHOW HIM.

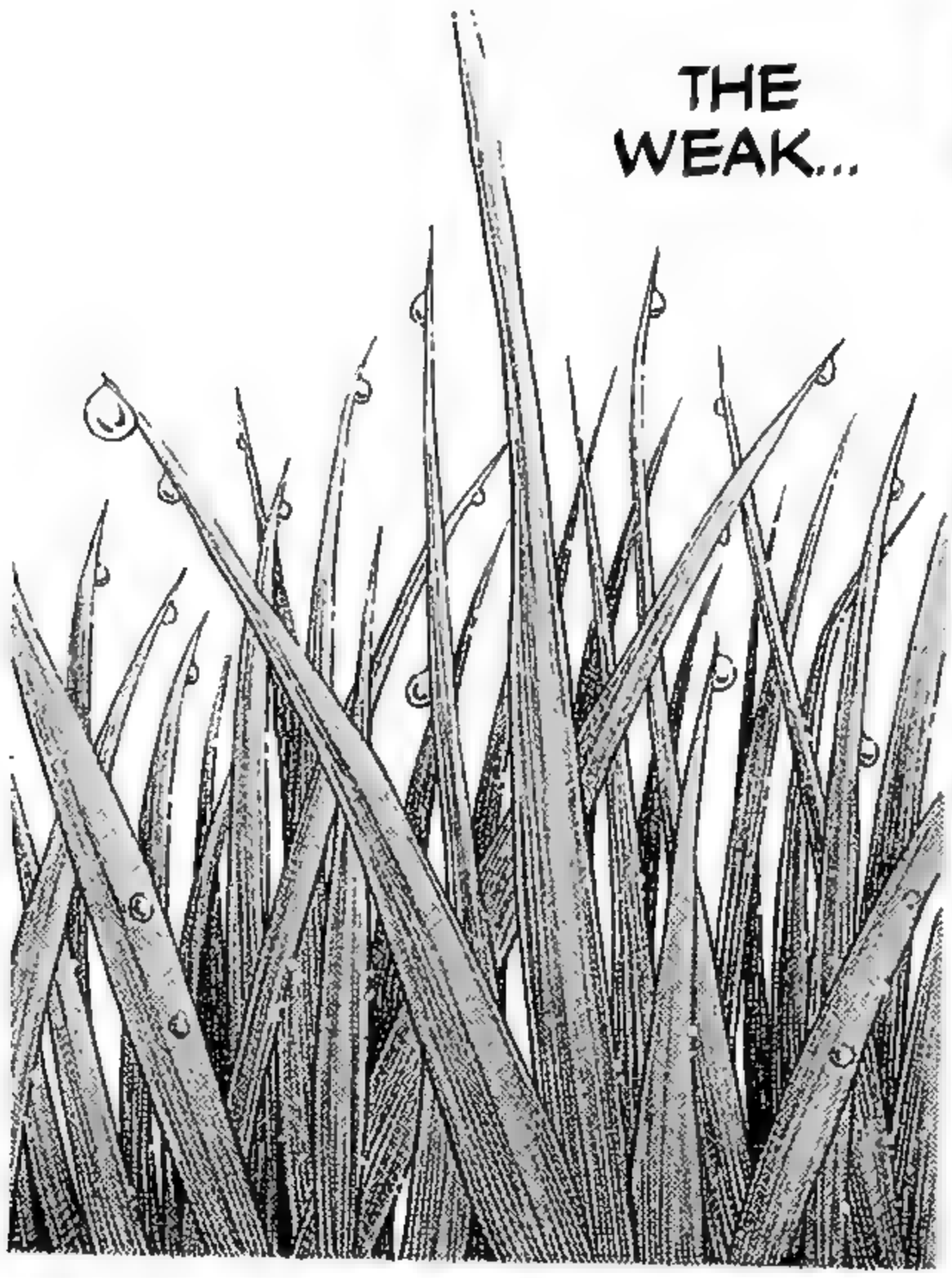


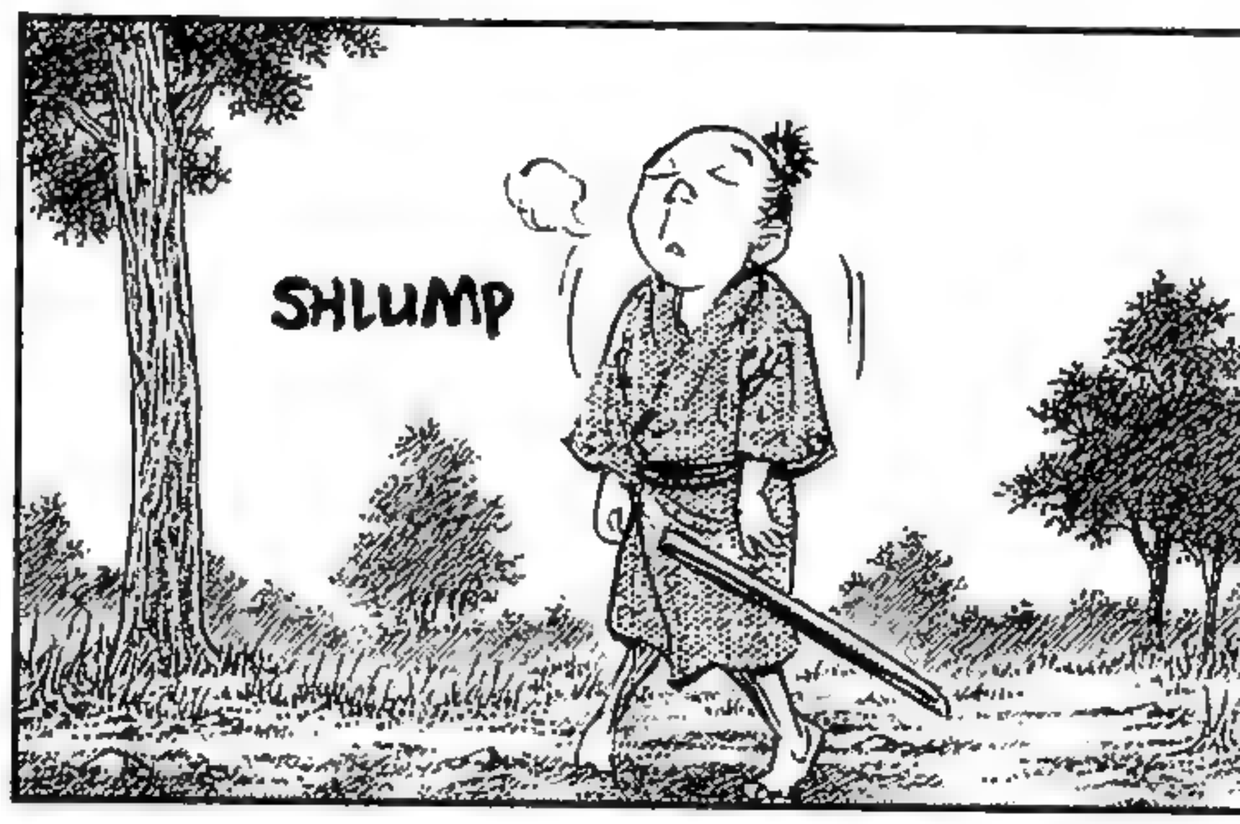
FSH


HEY, IORI, GIVE IT UP.
WORK ON YOUR FIELD.
YOU'LL NEVER BECOME A SAMURAI.
HA HA HA!!
SHUT UP!

...


...
HUF
HUF
HE PROBABLY MEANS TO STAY LOOSE IN THE ARMS...


THE WEAK...


SHLUMP

...AT ALL.

YOU DON'T SEE THE WEAK...

I HAVE NO IDEA...

HUF

HUF

...WHAT HE MEANS.

WAIT!
HUF
HUF

WAIT FOR ME.

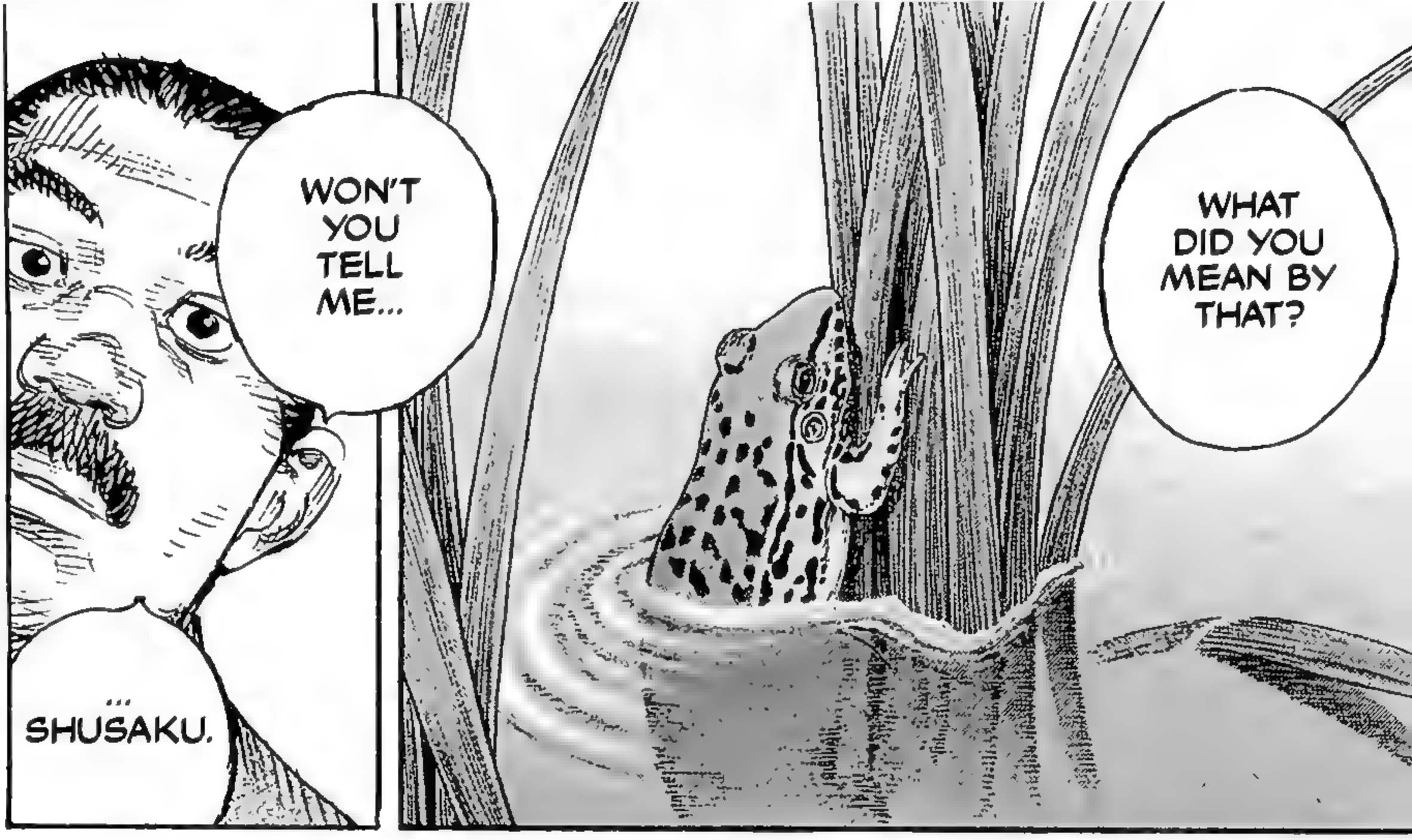
HUF

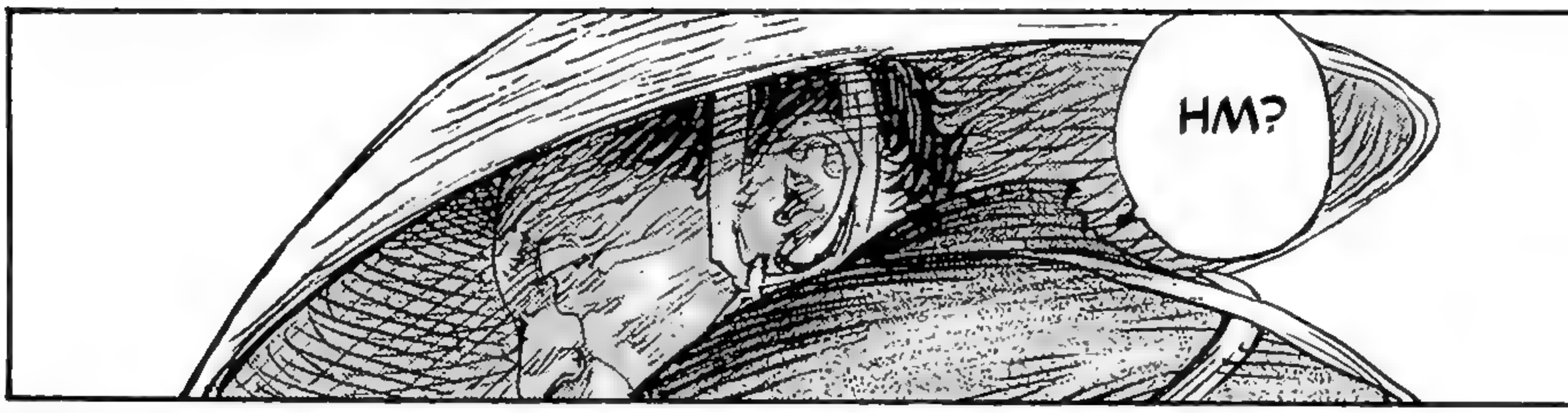
HUF

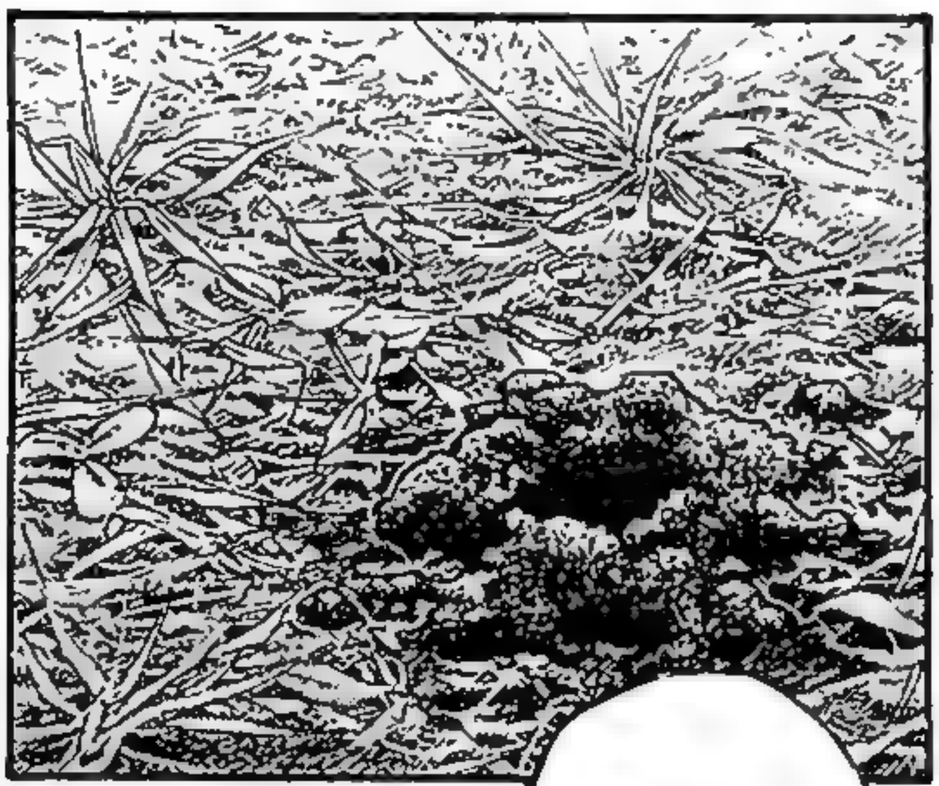
HUF

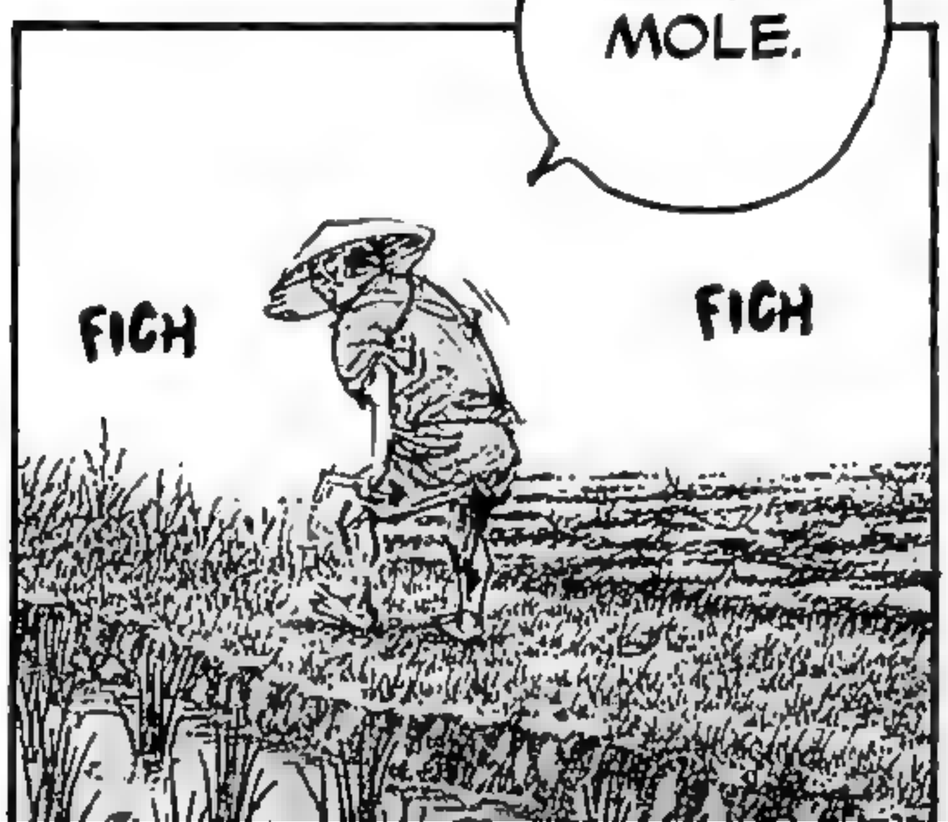
WE'VE GOT STRUGGLES OF OUR OWN HERE.

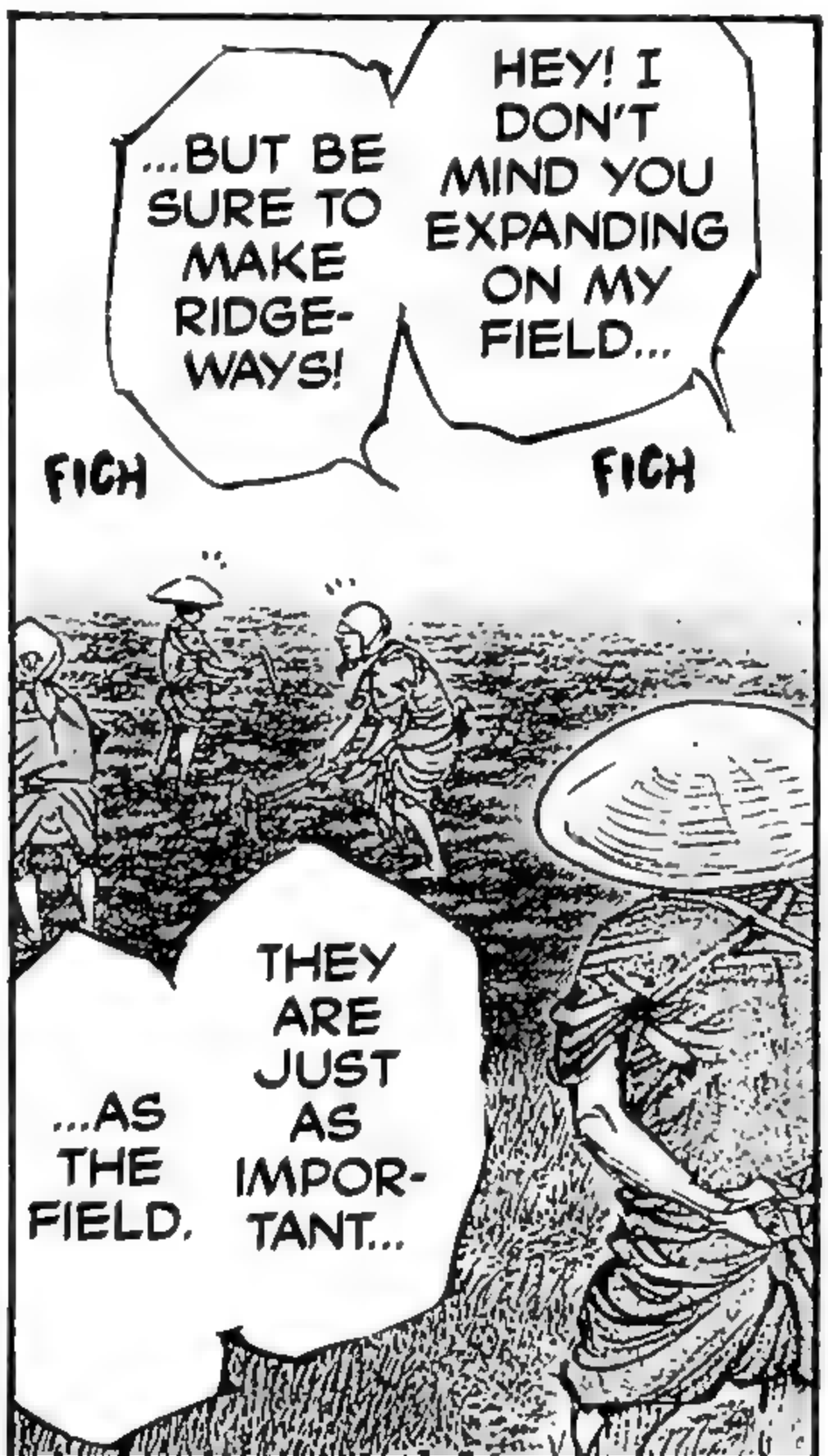
YOU DON'T SEE THE WEAK. GO AWAY BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE.


WON'T YOU TELL ME...
...SHUSAKU.
WHAT DID YOU MEAN BY THAT?


HM?


HUH, A MOLE.


FICH
FICH

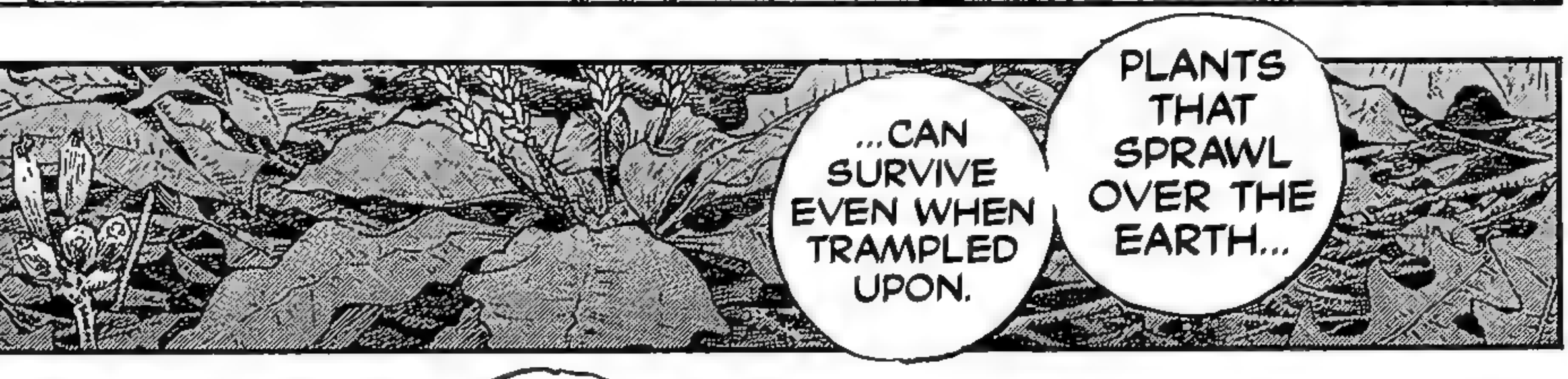

...BUT BE SURE TO MAKE RIDGE-WAYS!
HEY! I DON'T MIND YOU EXPANDING ON MY FIELD...
FICH
FICH
...AS THE FIELD.
THEY ARE JUST AS IMPOR-TANT...

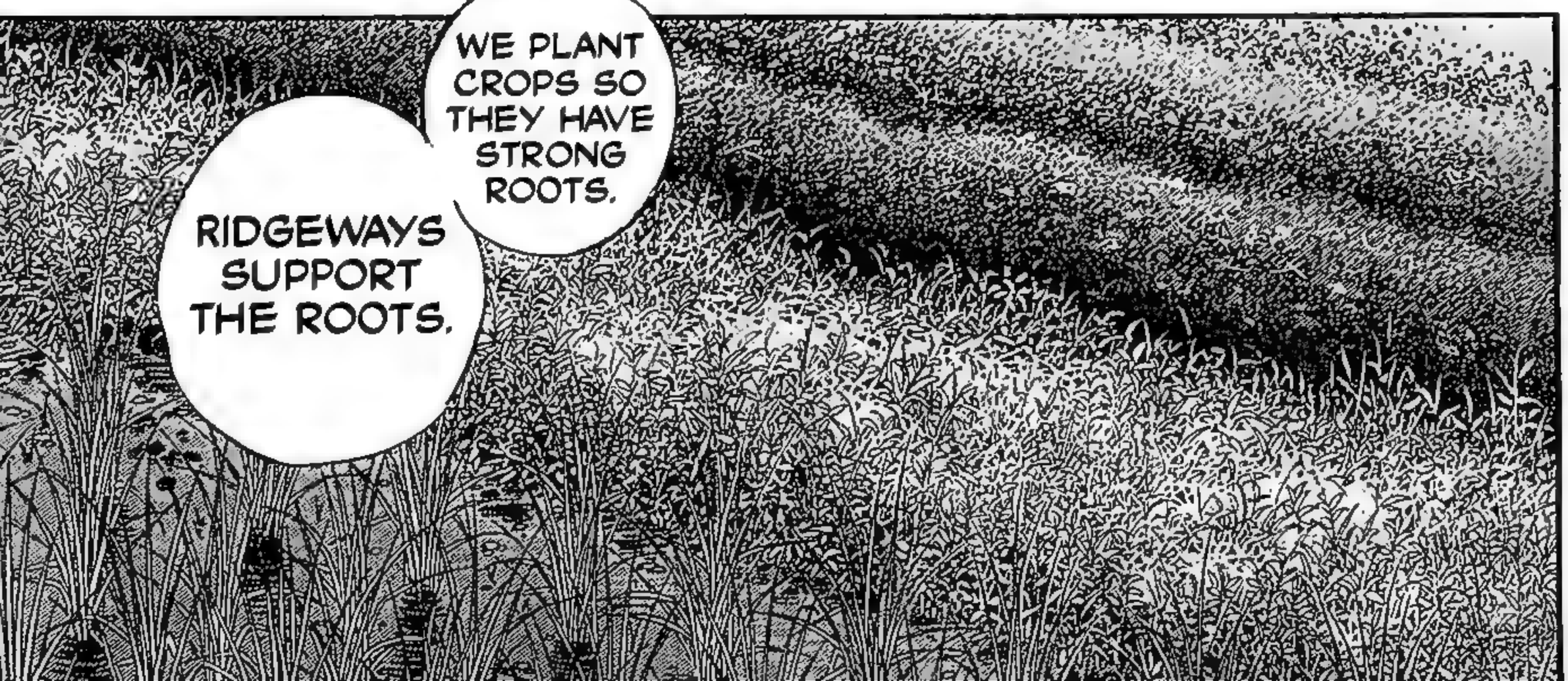
...
FICH

FICH
FICH

FICH

IF THEY GROW...
...THEY'LL BLOCK THE LIGHT FOR THE CROP BELOW
SO YOU HAVE TO PULL THE WEEDS OUT OF THE RIDGEWAYS.


...CAN SURVIVE EVEN WHEN TRAMPLED UPON.
PLANTS THAT SPRAWL OVER THE EARTH...


WE PLANT CROPS SO THEY HAVE STRONG ROOTS.
RIDGEWAYS SUPPORT THE ROOTS.

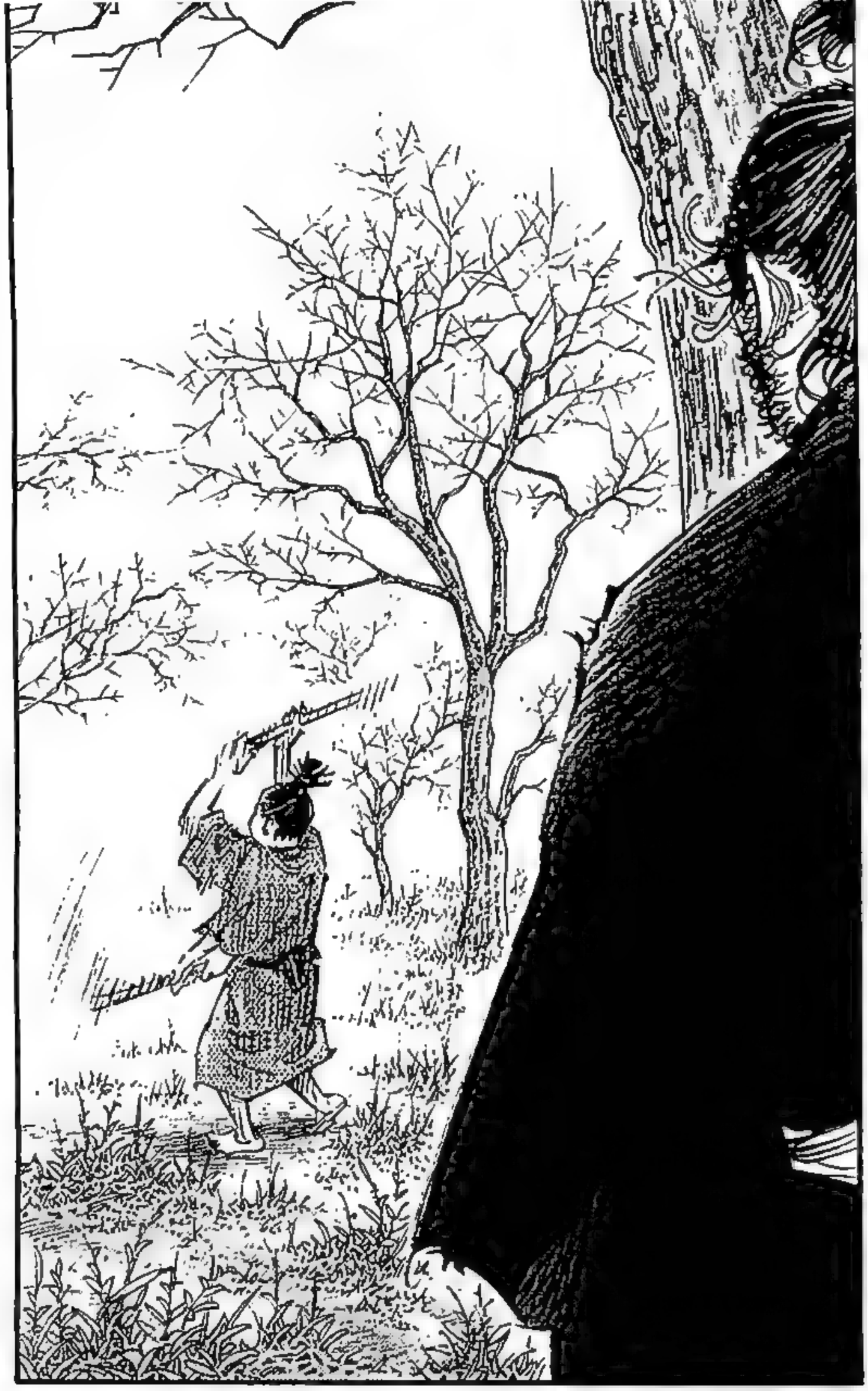
THAT WILL ENSURE THE CROPS GROW PROPERLY.
WITH A SOLID RIDGEWAY, WE CAN IRRIGATE THE FIELDS.

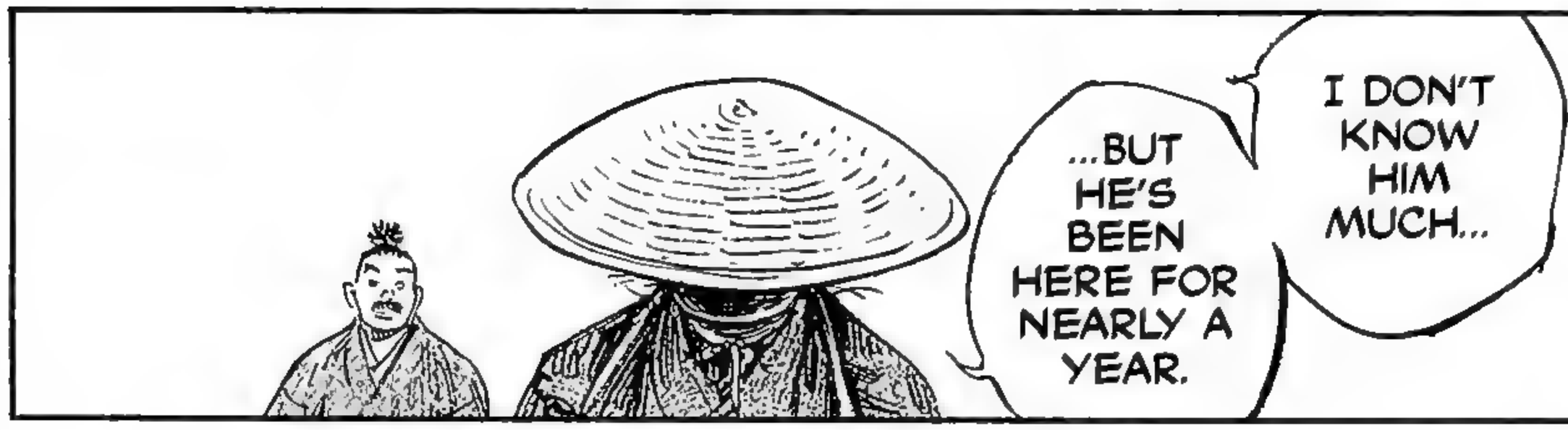
THAT'S HOW WE SURVIVE.

THAT'S THE KIND OF MAN "MIYAMOTO MUSASHI" IS, RIGHT?

THE TALL WEEDS GROW QUICKLY...
...AND THE SHORTER PLANS WITHER AWAY.
IT GOES UP AND UP...
THE WEED DOESN'T CARE...

FICH
HE'S NOT ONE OF US.
FICH
FICH
I'VE GIVEN UP ON THEM, BUT TAKE A LOOK.
THANKS TO MUSASHI.
BUT THESE LAZY SCUM CHANGED THE ENTIRE VILLAGE...
NOW THEY HAVE THE NERVE TO HARVEST ON SOMEONE'S LAND.
MUSASHI'S CHANGED AS WELL.




...BUT HE'S BEEN HERE FOR NEARLY A YEAR.
I DON'T KNOW HIM MUCH...

HEY, SWORDS-MAN.

THERE ARE TIMES I THINK HE'S ONE OF US.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO MAKE ONE'S NAME AS A SWORDS-MAN?

YOU KNOW...

...I GO BY THE NAME TOYOZAEMON.

...SO HE CAN RISE TO THE TOP.

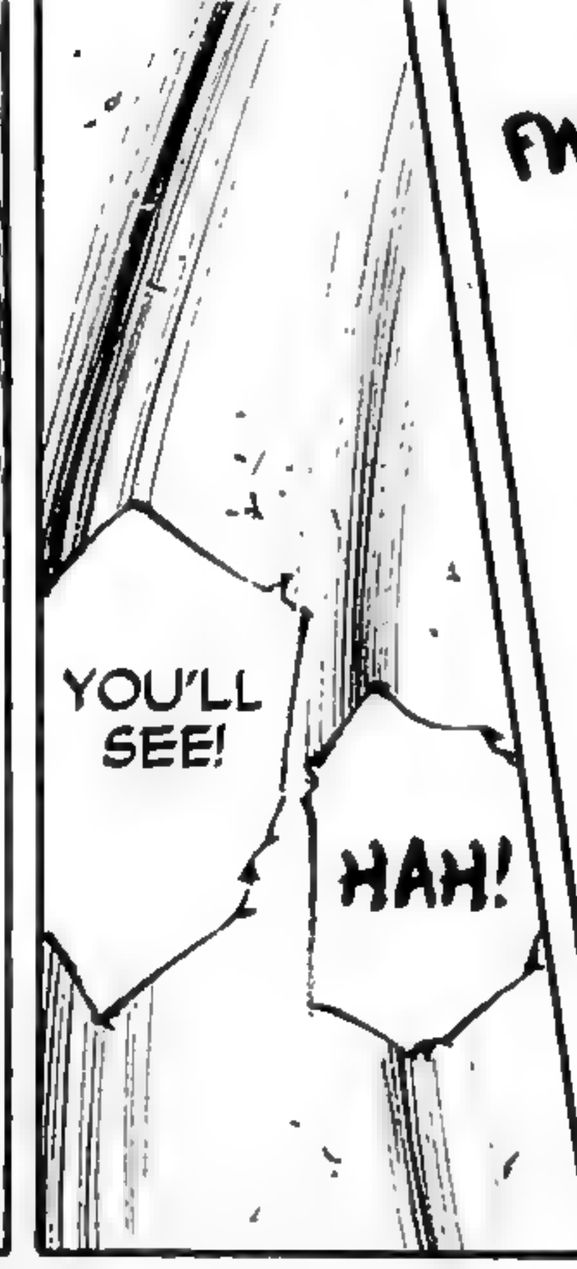
...NO, KILLS HIS ENEMIES ...

... DEFEATS ...

THE QUICKEST SWORD...

THAT'S HIS WAY OF LIFE, RIGHT?

I'M GOING TO BECOME A SAMURAI AT KUKURA.


YOU'LL SEE!
HAH!

FWSH
YAH!
DAMN IT!

...

RICE...
TOYO-ZAEMON...

...IS WEAK.
IT'S HELPLESS WITHOUT OUR CARE.
OUR JOB AS FARMERS ...
...IS TO FIGURE OUT WHAT IT NEEDS, AND WHAT IT DOESN'T LIKE.
WE LISTEN ...
...AND FIGURE OUT WHAT TO DO.
IT'S SURVIVAL.
ALL WE THINK ABOUT IS...
...HOW TO PROLONG LIFE.

KILL SOMEONE BY THE SWORD?
YOU MUST BE JOKING,

YOU MAY HAVE YOUR REASONS...

...BUT I DON'T UNDER-STAND IT.

...

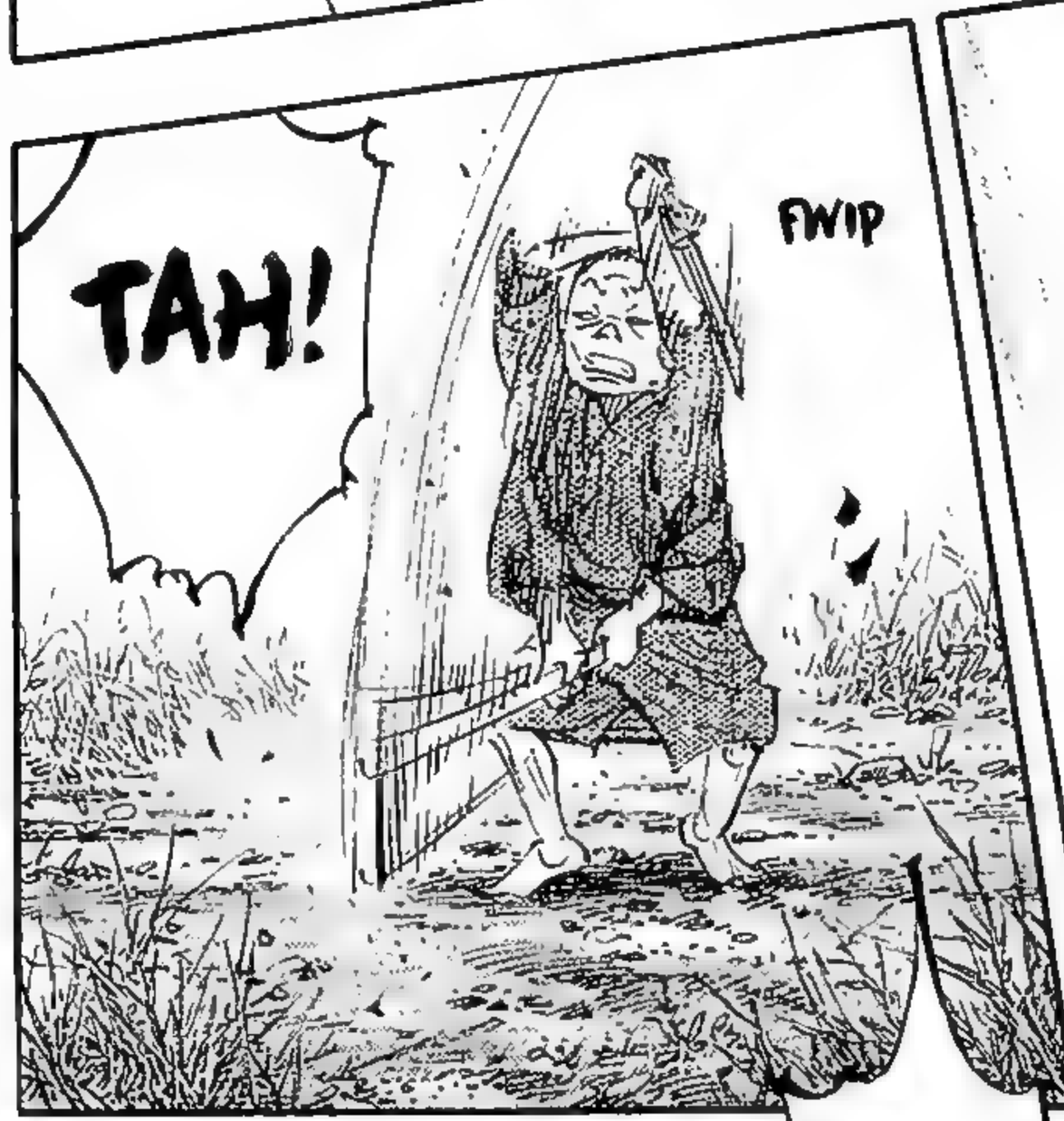
FWIP

#321 | Shusaku Falls

NO. NO! THIS ISN'T RIGHT!
THE WAY MUSASHI SENSEI DOES IT...

FWIP
DAMN IT!
DAMN IT!

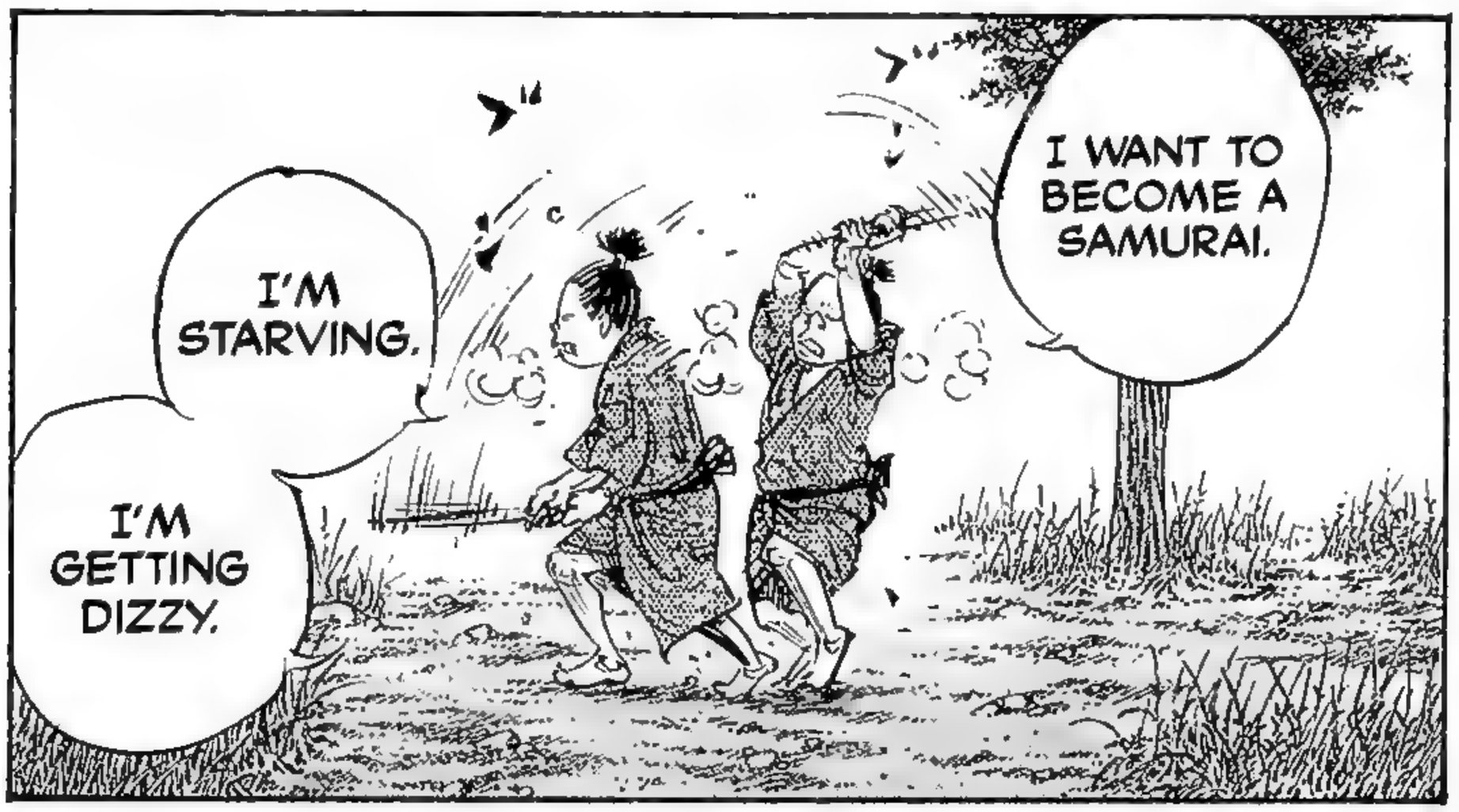
IT'S MORE LIKE...

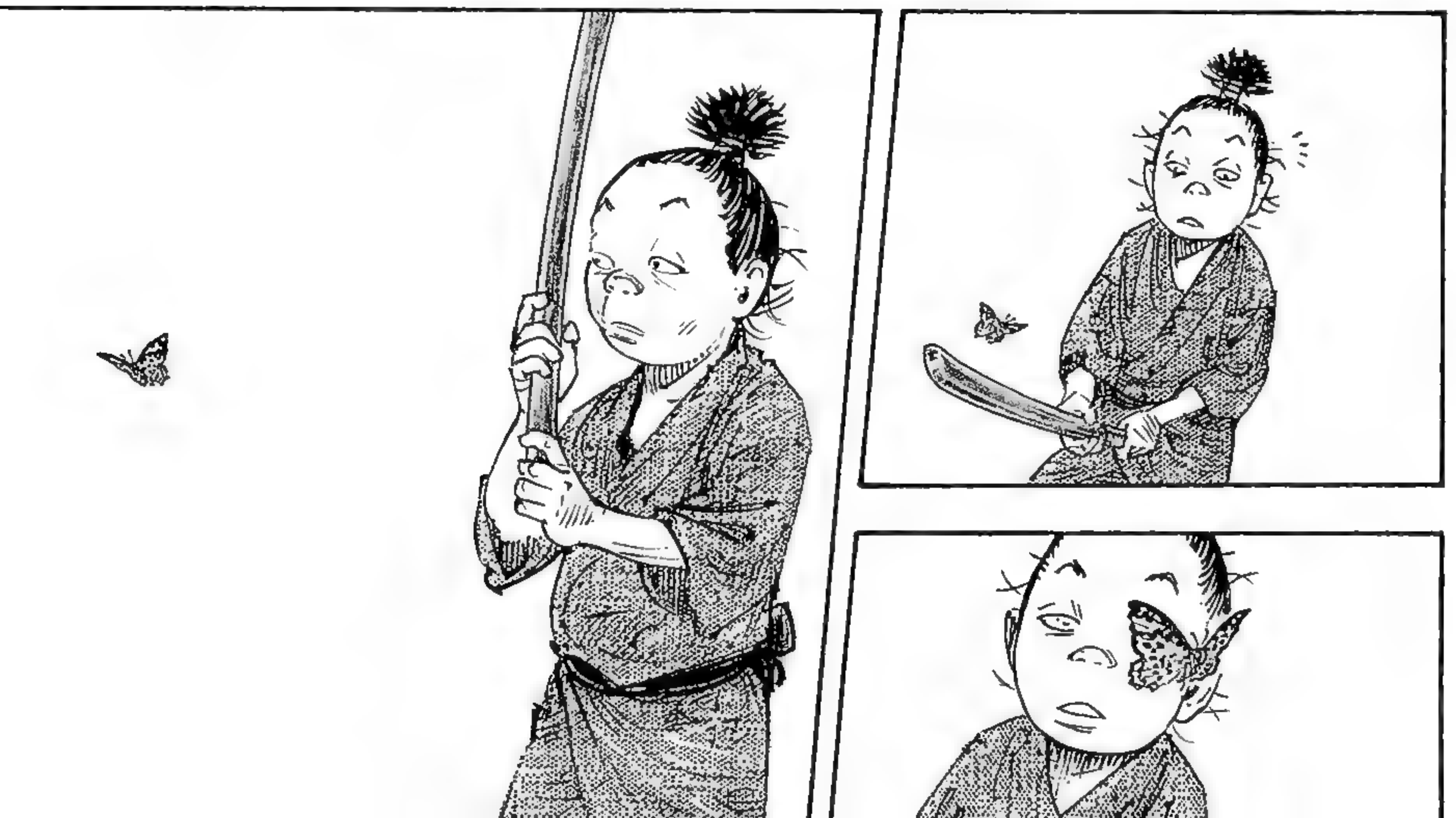

TAH!
FWIP

ARGH!
THAT'S NOT IT AT ALL!

MY ARMS ARE SORE FROM SQUEEZING TOO HARD.
SNIFF
I CAN'T LIFT THEM UP ANYMORE.

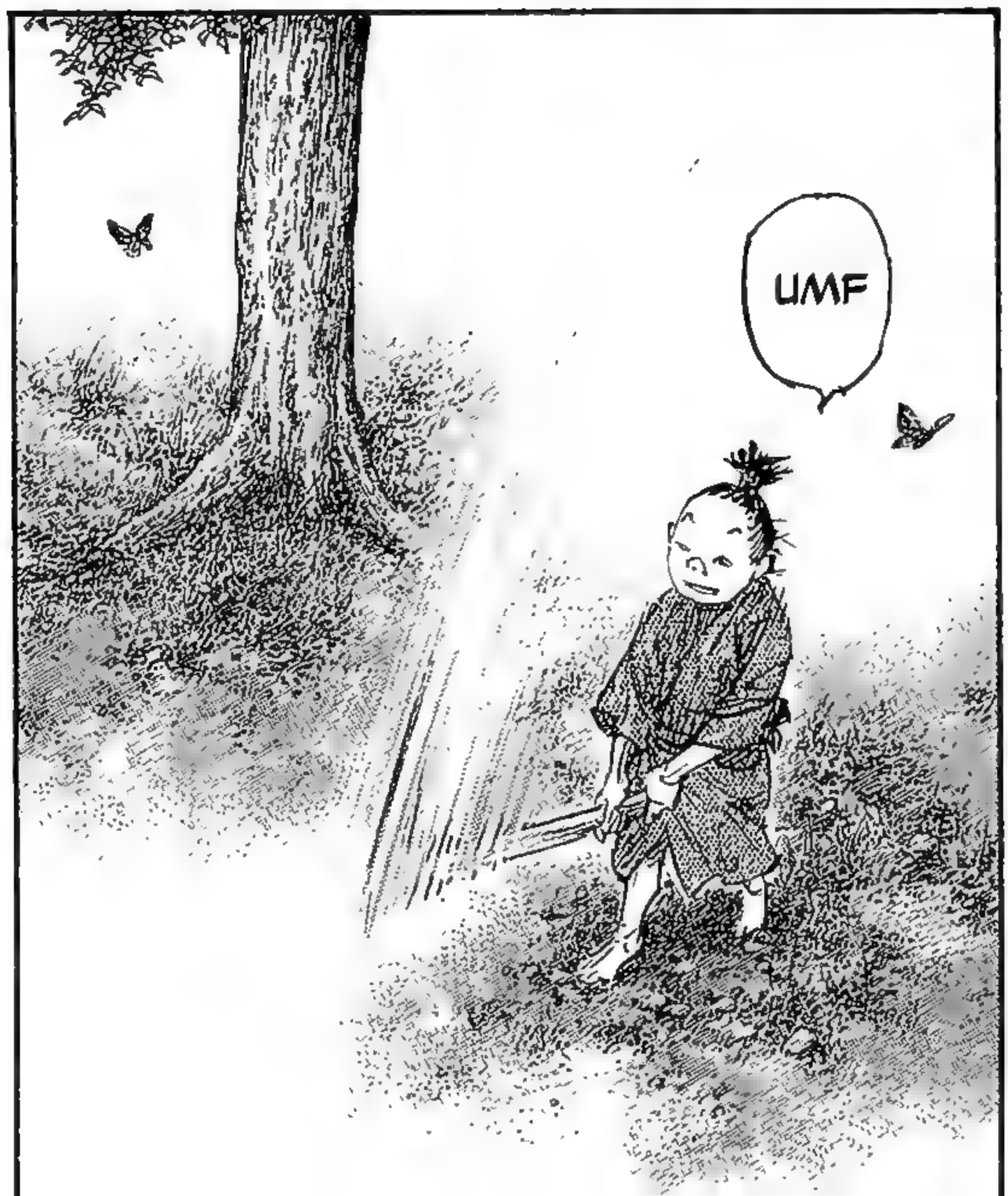
AS IF YOU HAVE NO ARMS.
BUT I DO HAVE ARMS.


I WANT TO BECOME A SAMURAI.
I'M STARVING.
I'M GETTING DIZZY.



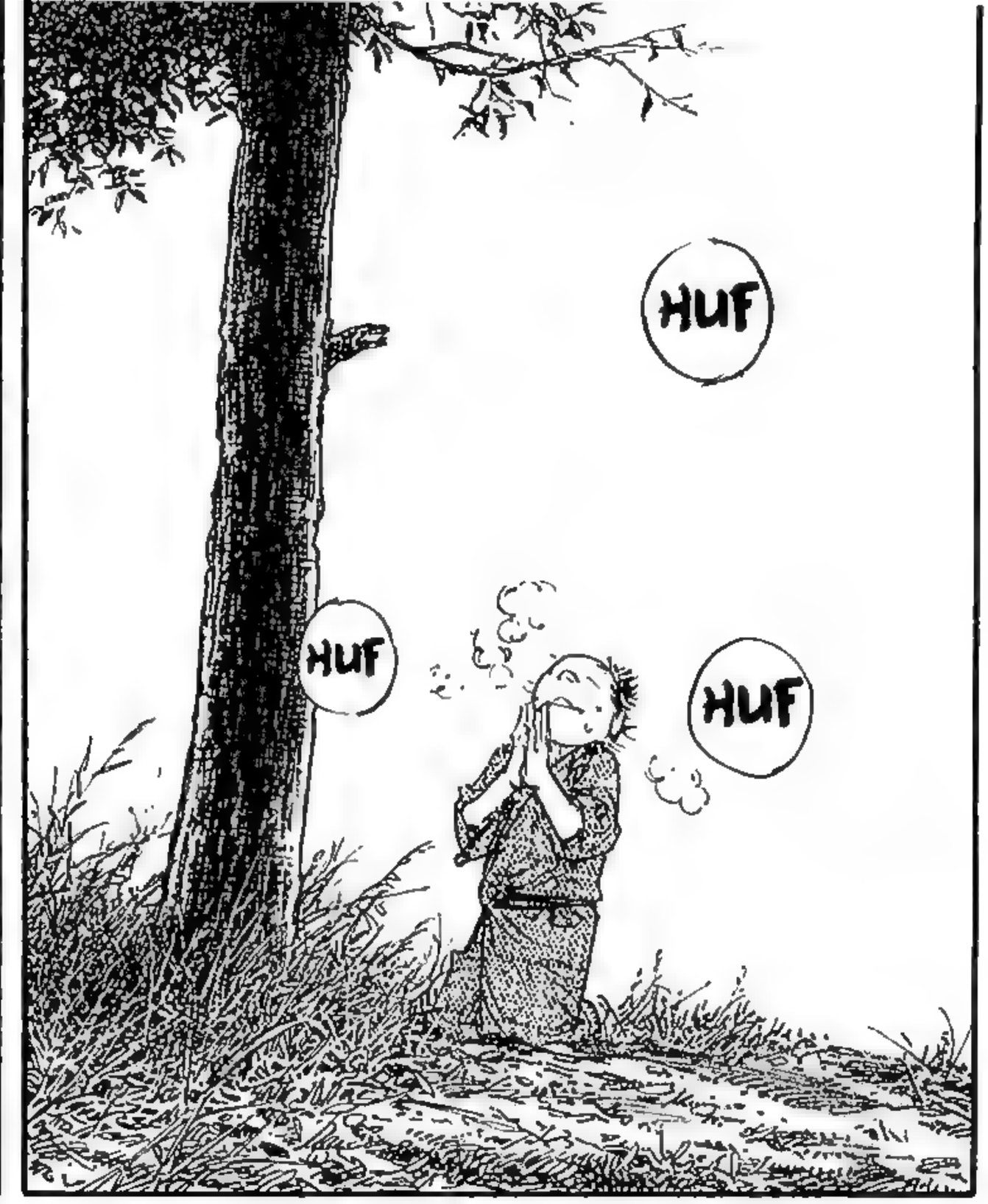
UMF
UMF

IT'S FATHER.


UMF

UMF
UMF
...

AAAA



IORI...

WHEREVER YOU ARE...

EVEN IF SOMEDAY...

...YOU MUST ALWAYS RETURN TO THIS MOMENT. THIS PLACE.

...YOU'VE ALWAYS GOT THIS "CAVE."

...YOU LOSE YOUR WAY...

YOU MUST...

...CARVE THAT JOY INTO THIS MOMENT RIGHT HERE.

GONZO MUST HAVE PLANTED THIS AREA...

A LITTLE RESTRAINT, BUT NEAT.

THIS HERE'S MUSASHI'S...

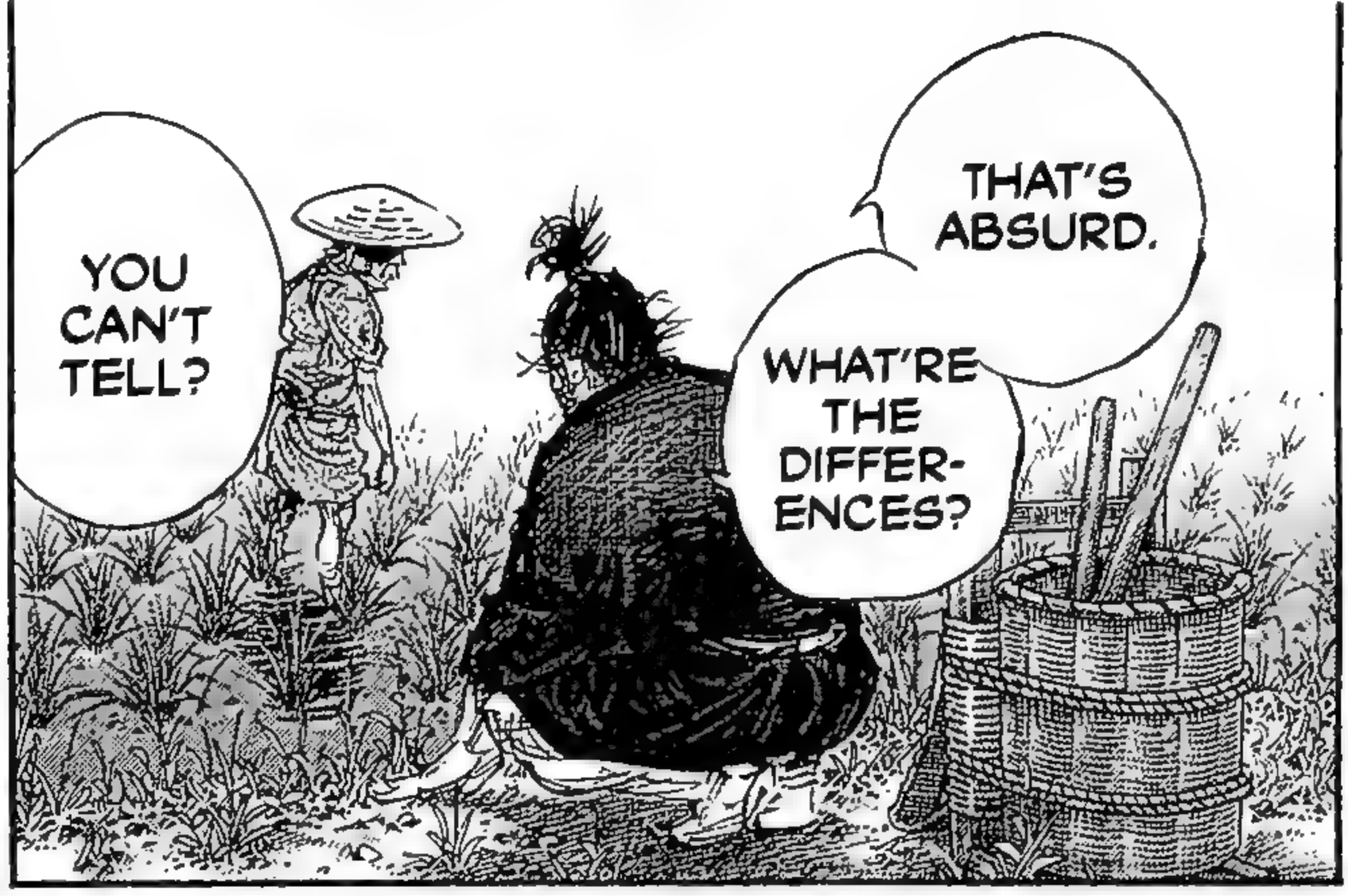
NO DOUBT.

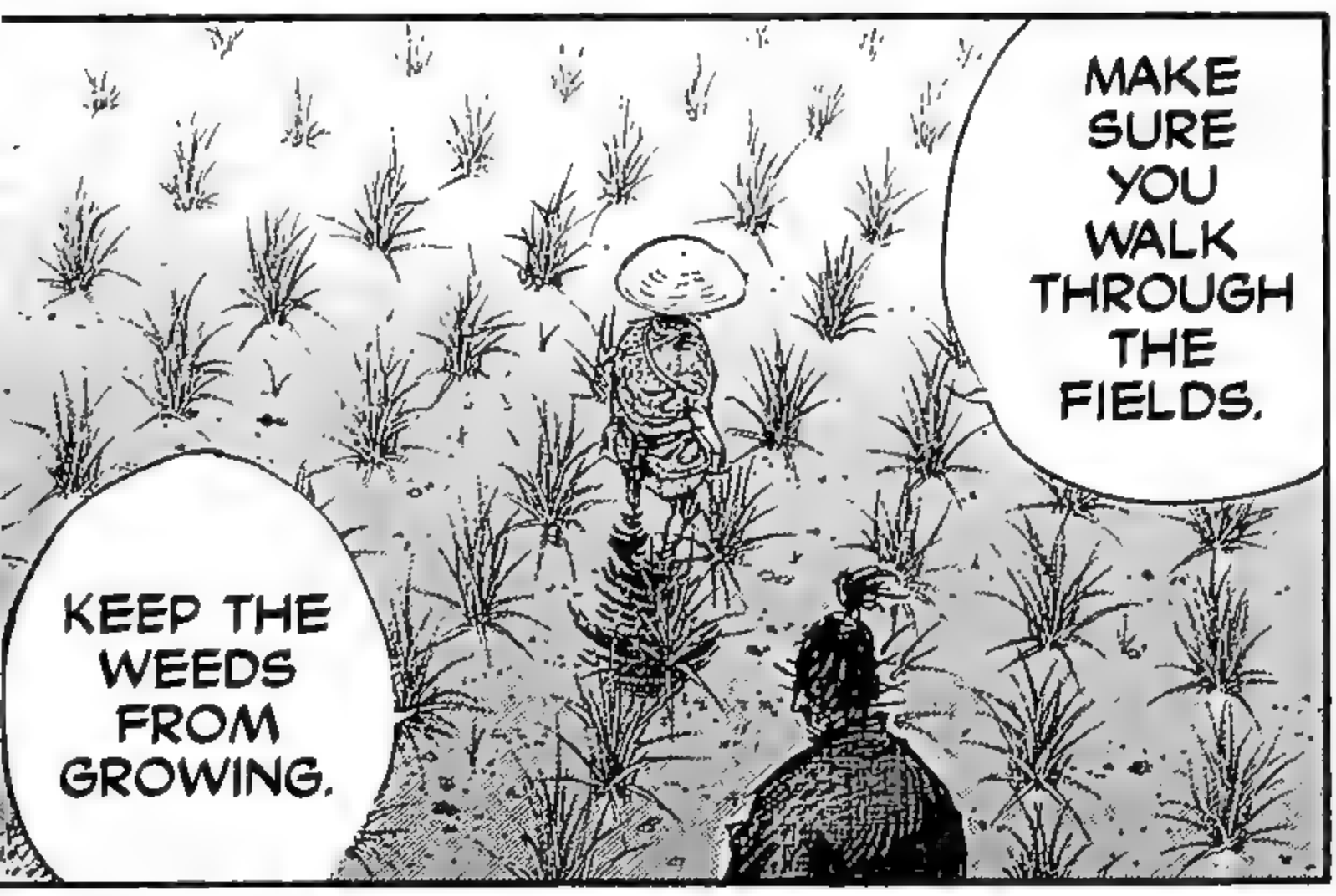
THEY'VE BOUNCED BACK.

FUNNY HOW THE CROPS TAKE AFTER THEIR PLANTERS.

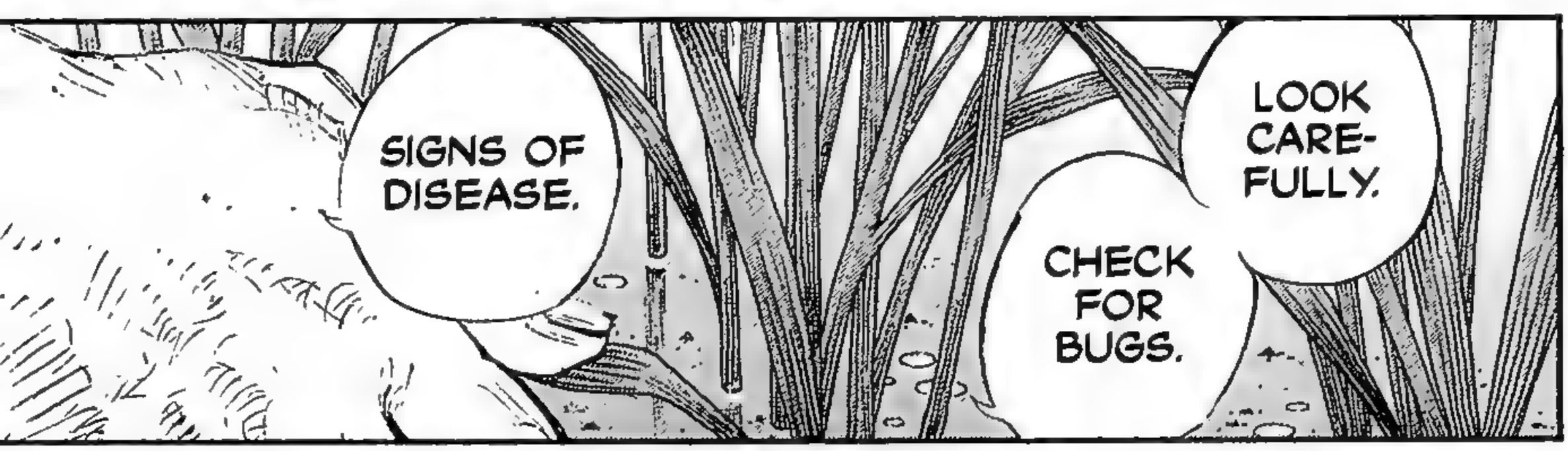
?

STOP SQUINTING SO HARD.


YOU CAN'T TELL?
THAT'S ABSURD.
WHAT'RE THE DIFFER-ENCES?

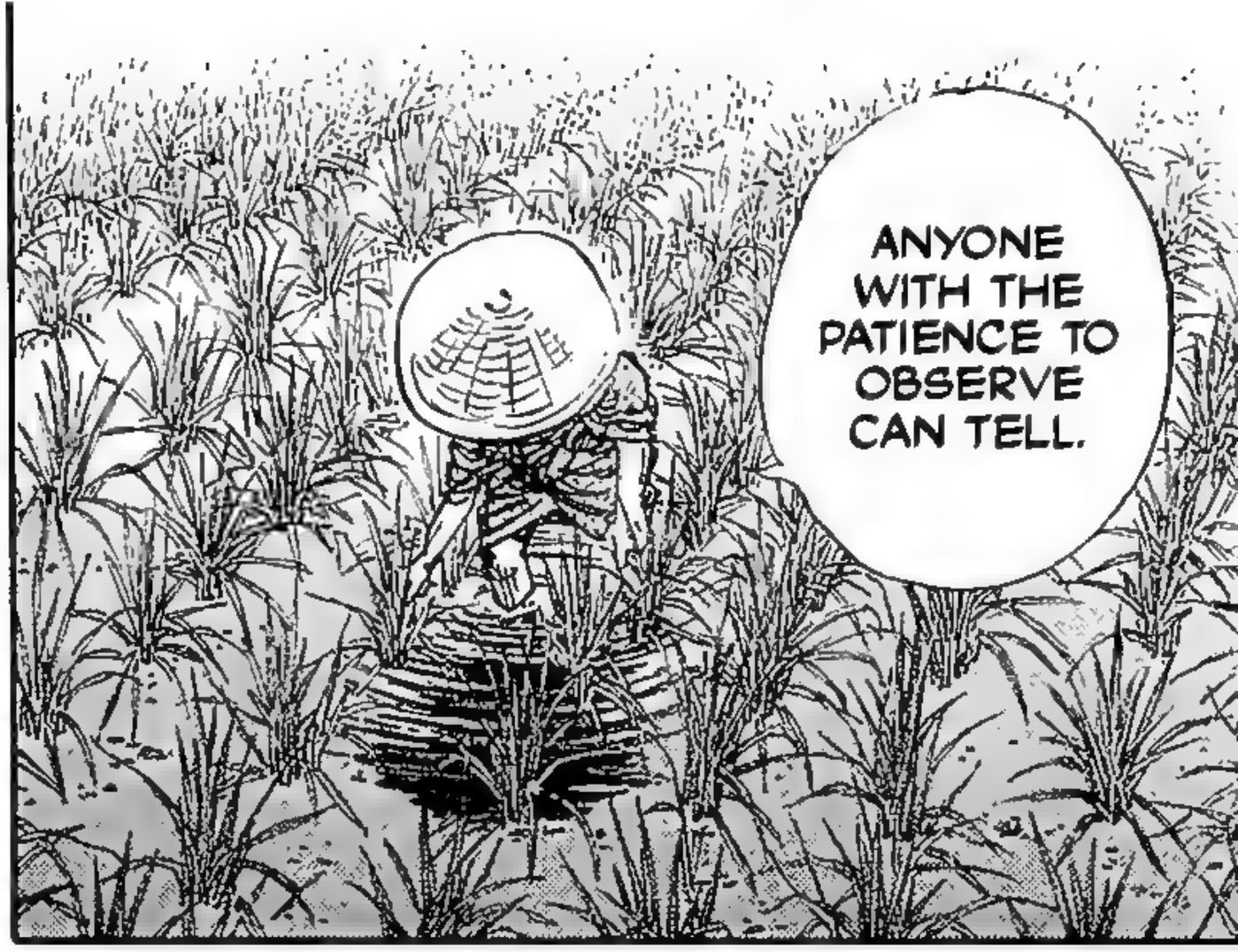

MAKE SURE YOU WALK THROUGH THE FIELDS.
KEEP THE WEEDS FROM GROWING.

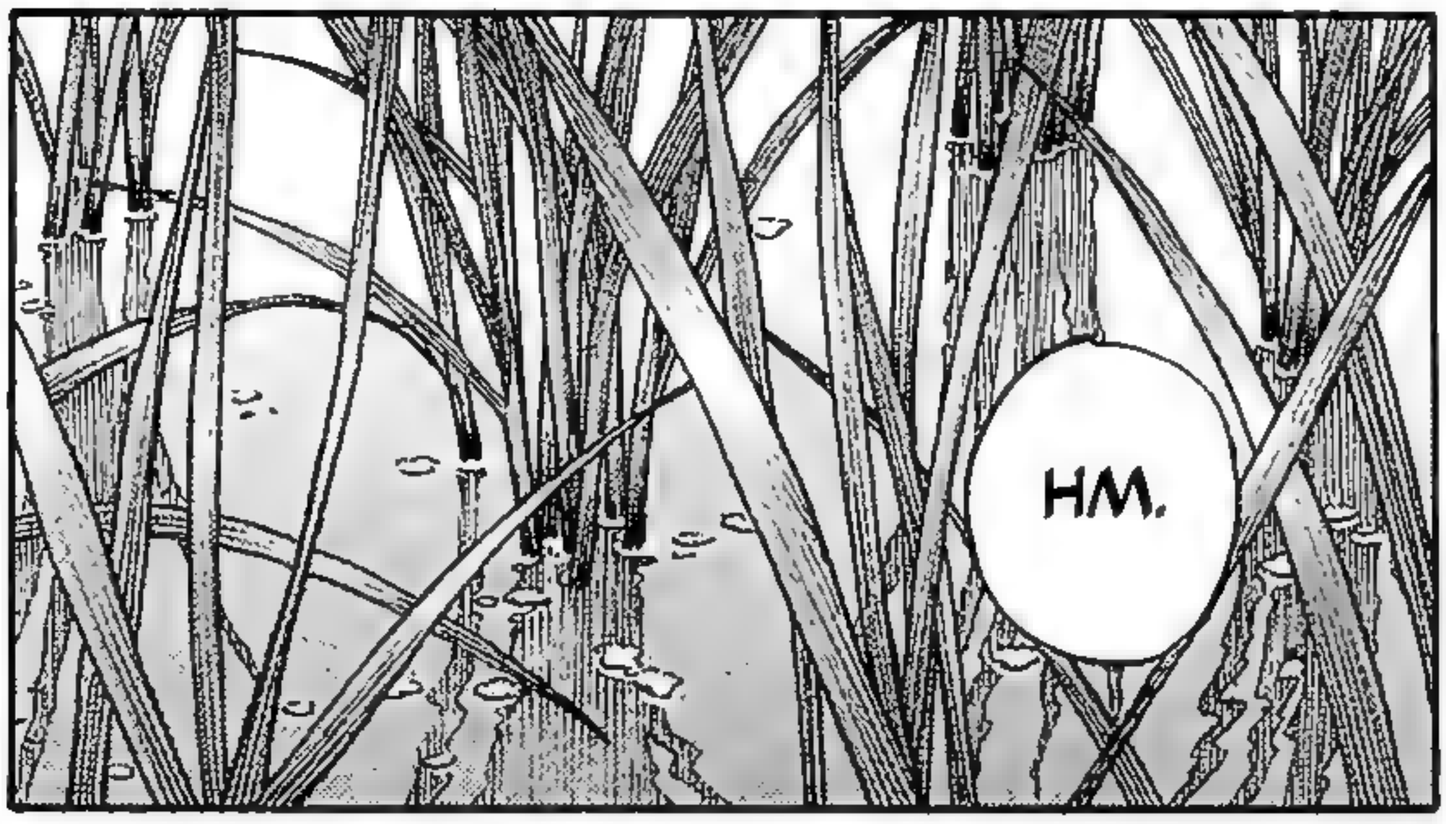
KOFF

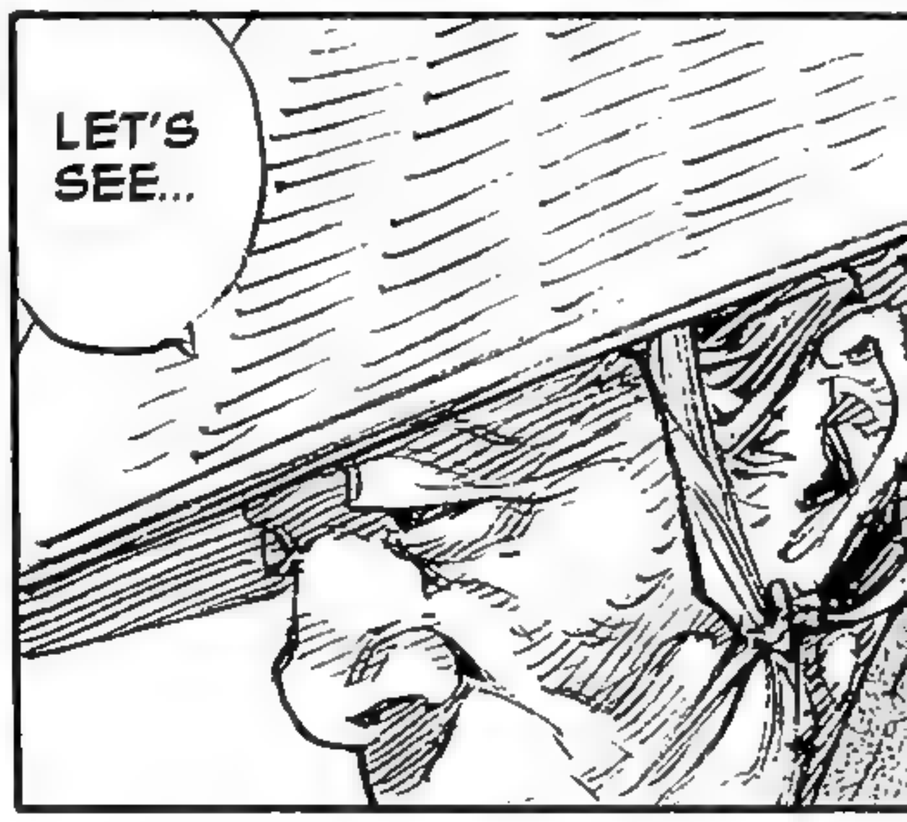

SIGNS OF DISEASE.
LOOK CARE-FULLY.
CHECK FOR BUGS.

UNLESS YOU THINK THEY CAN RECOVER.
THEY MUST BE REMOVED.
IF YOU SEE ANY...

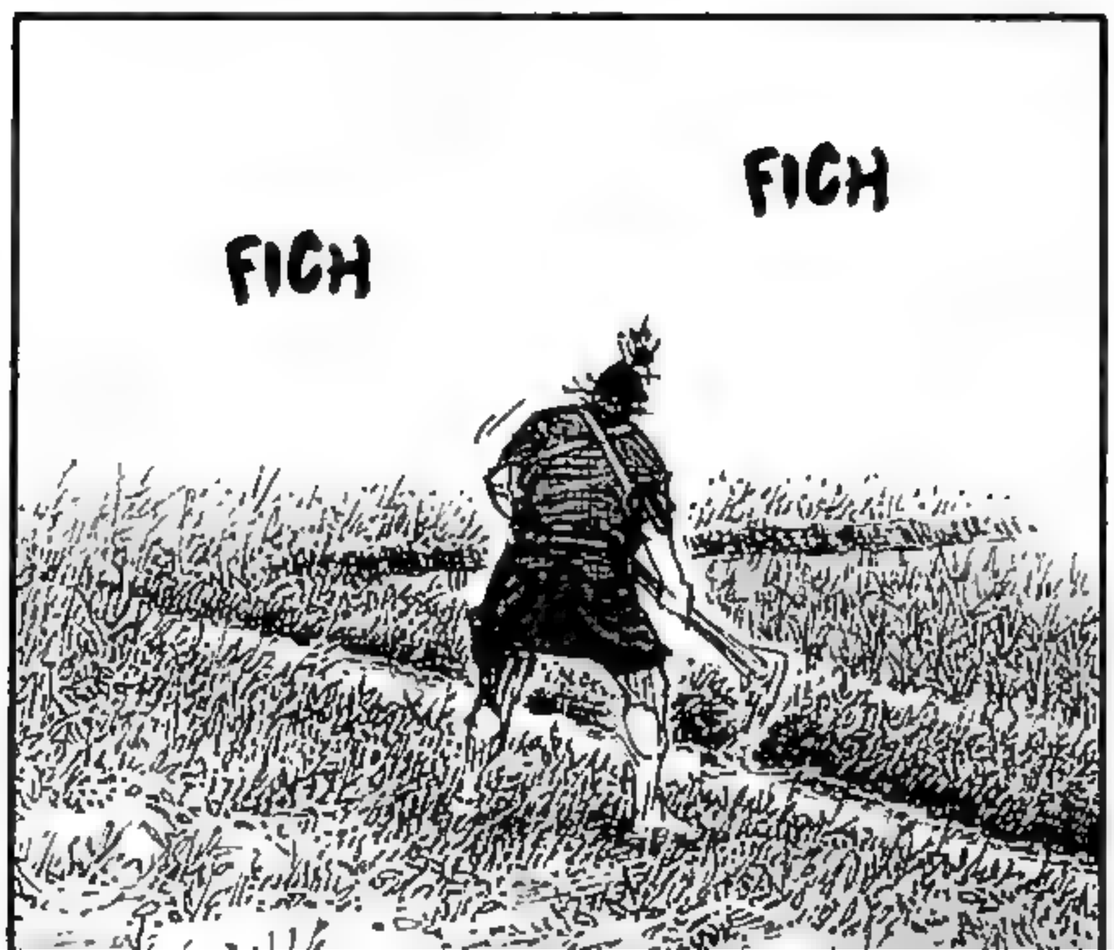
...!!


ANYONE WITH THE PATIENCE TO OBSERVE CAN TELL.


HM.


LET'S SEE...

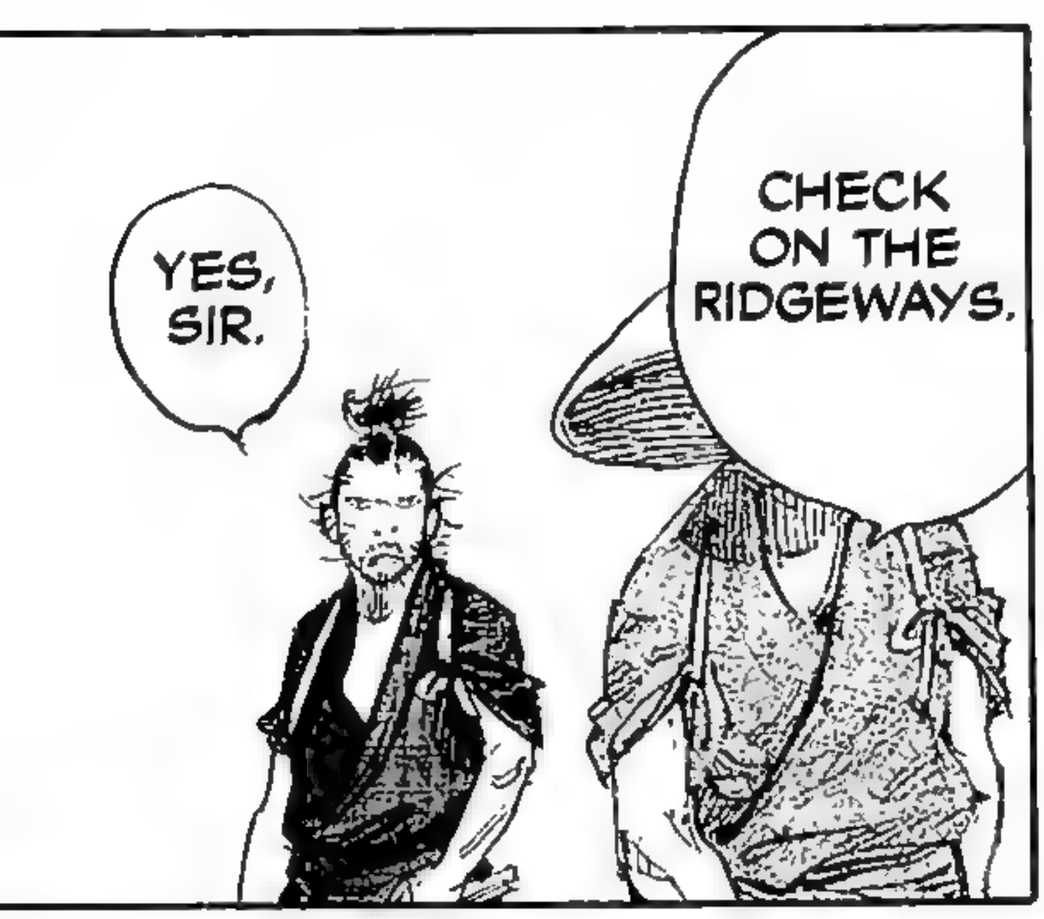
ADD SOME WATER AND REFILL IT.
THE WIND DOESN'T FLOW THROUGH HERE.

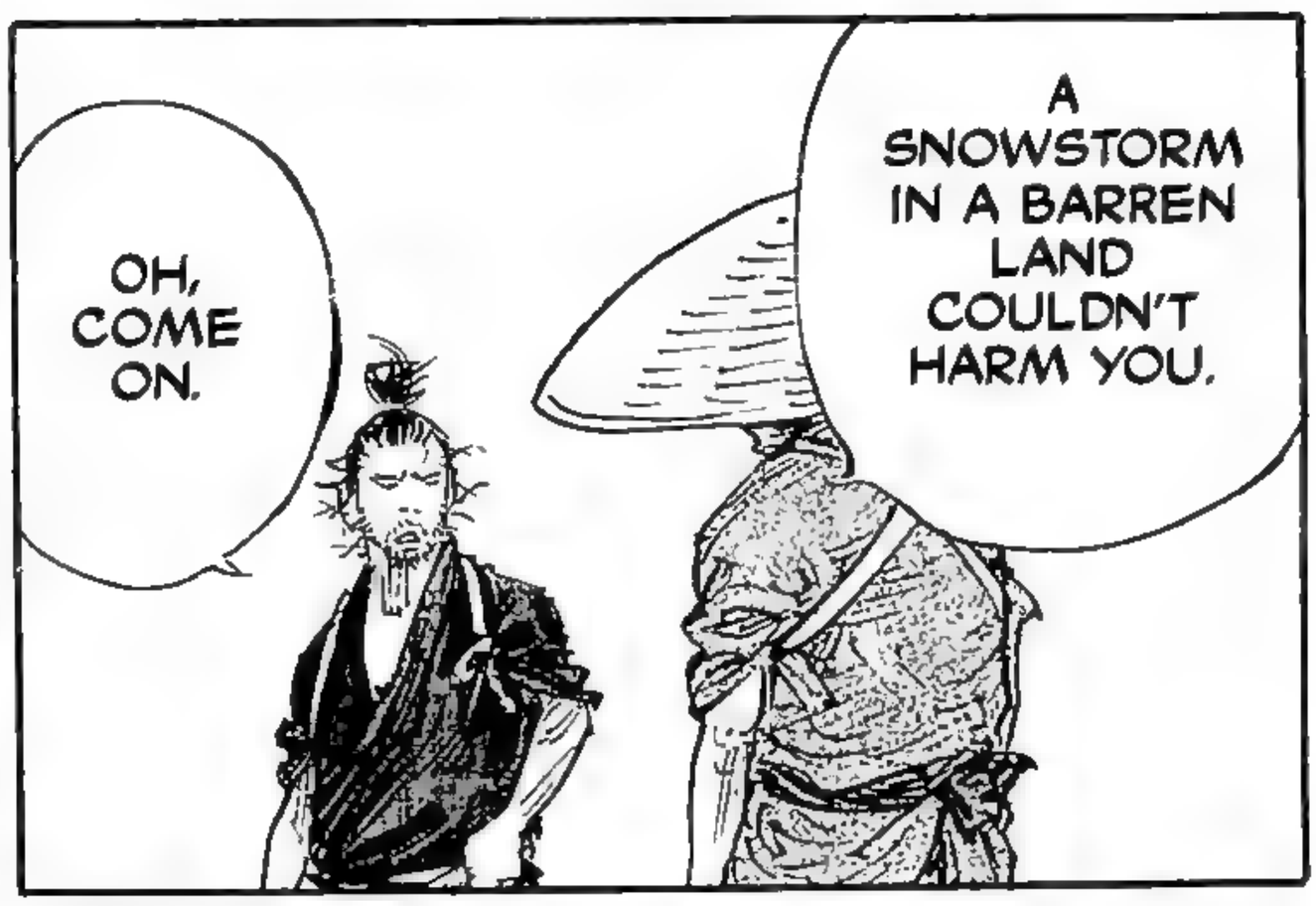

FICH
FICH

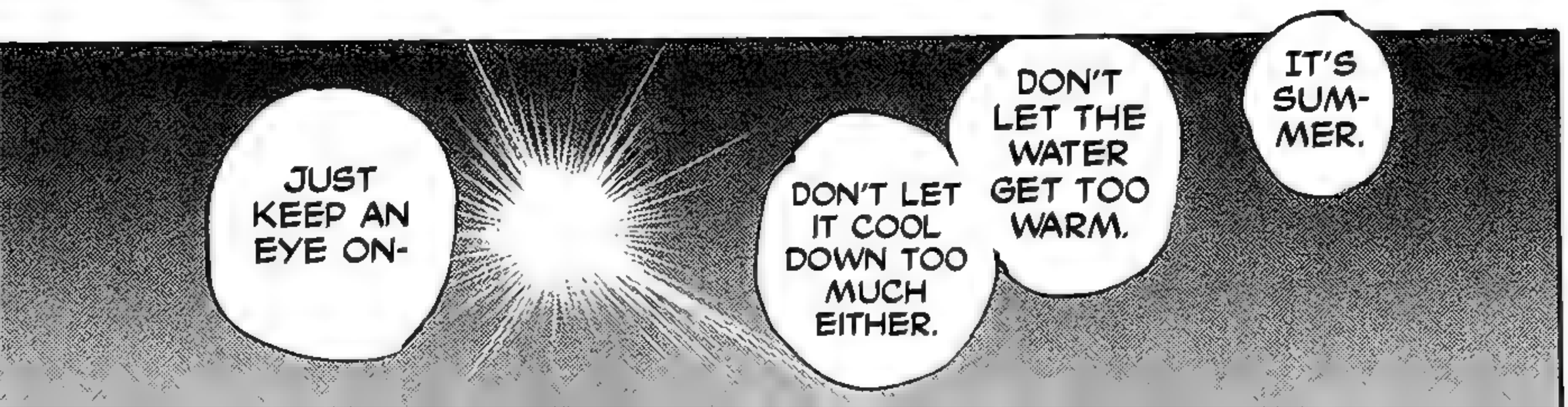
WOW
OH-
ALL RIGHT.

IF WATER IS ABLE TO FLOW THROUGH, THEN SO WILL THE WIND.

THE PLANTS NEED THAT FLOW BETWEEN THEM.







WHY SHOULD I BE TEACHING THIS TO SOME DRIFTER SWORDSMAN.

HMPH...

KOFF KOFF

CHIRP

CHIRP

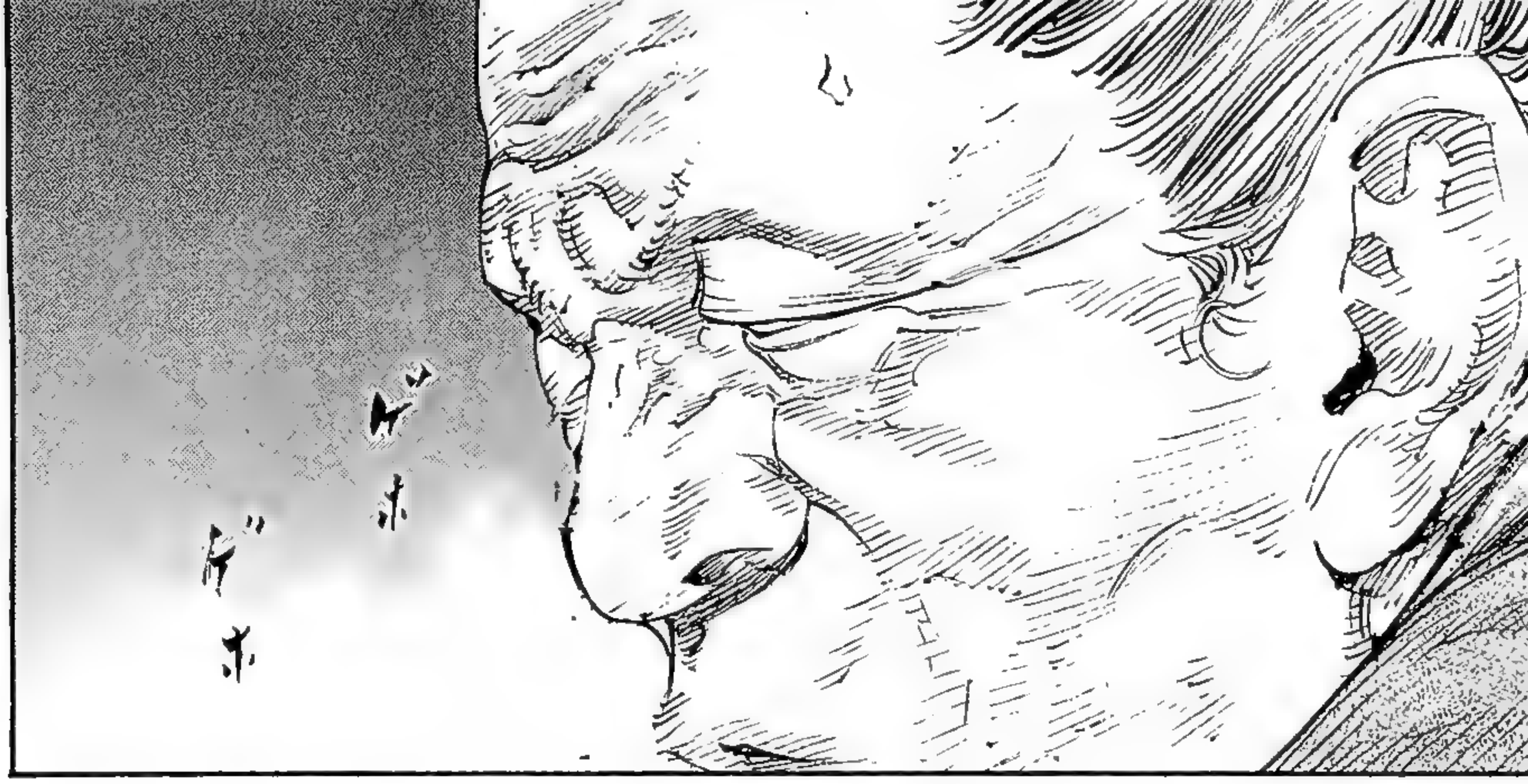
... YOU PLAN ON CUTTING MORE DOWN, EH?

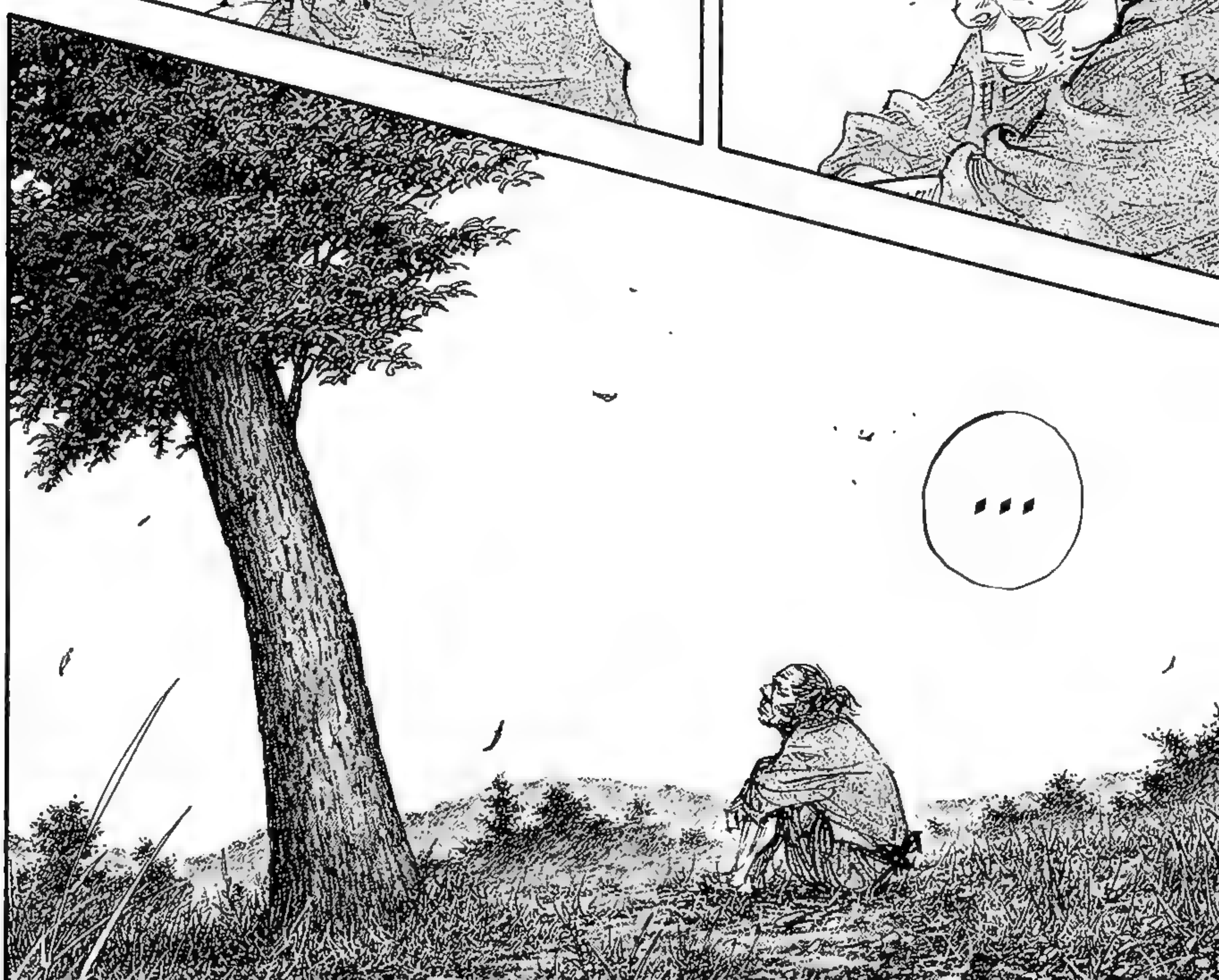
CHIRP

AFTER YOU LEAVE...

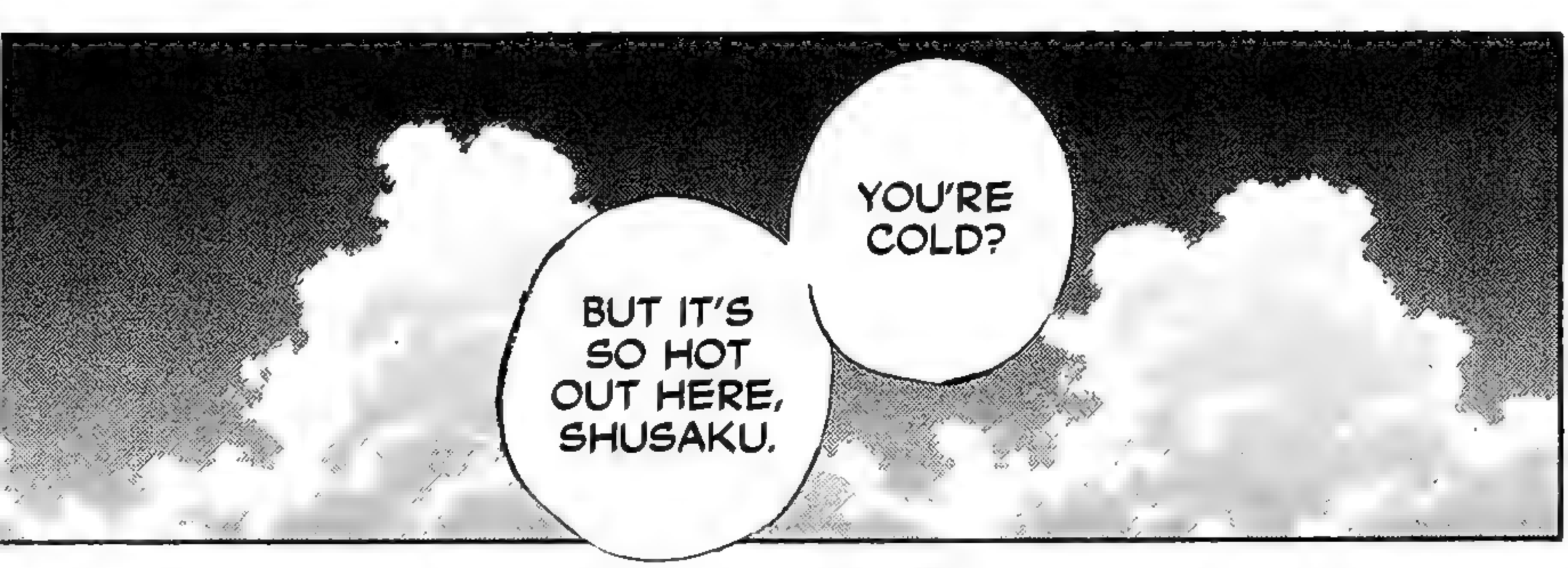
CHIRP

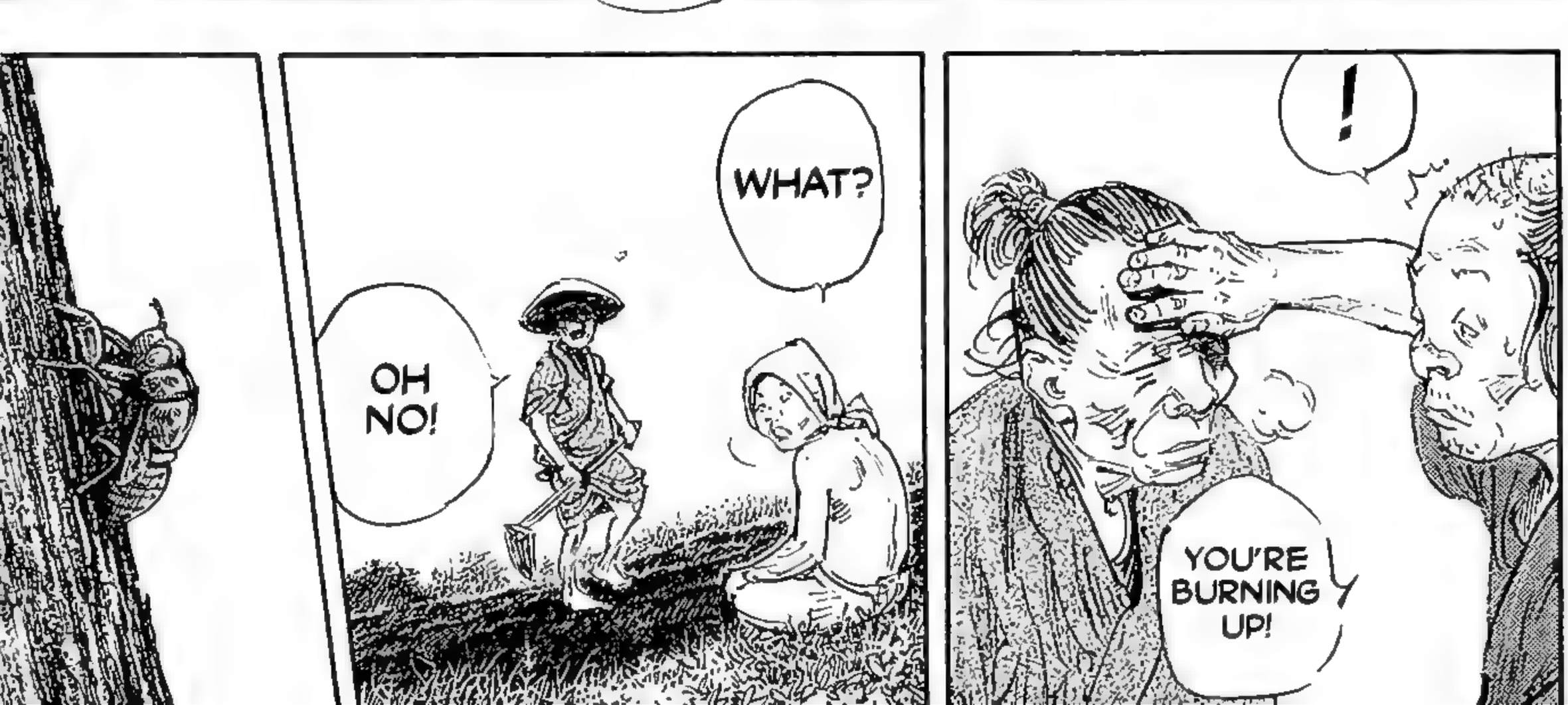
I JUST DON'T GET IT.
THE KILLER WINS...
...AGAINST SOMEONE HE DOESN'T EVEN HATE.





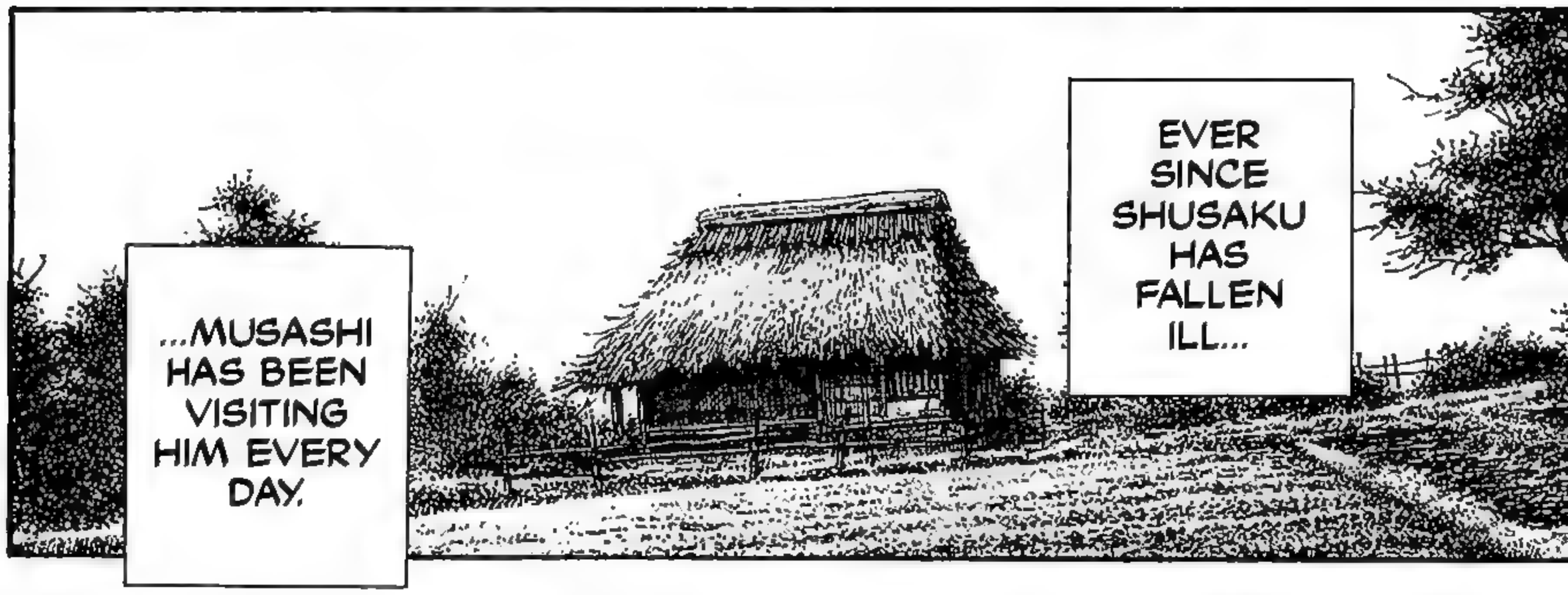
BRR
BRR

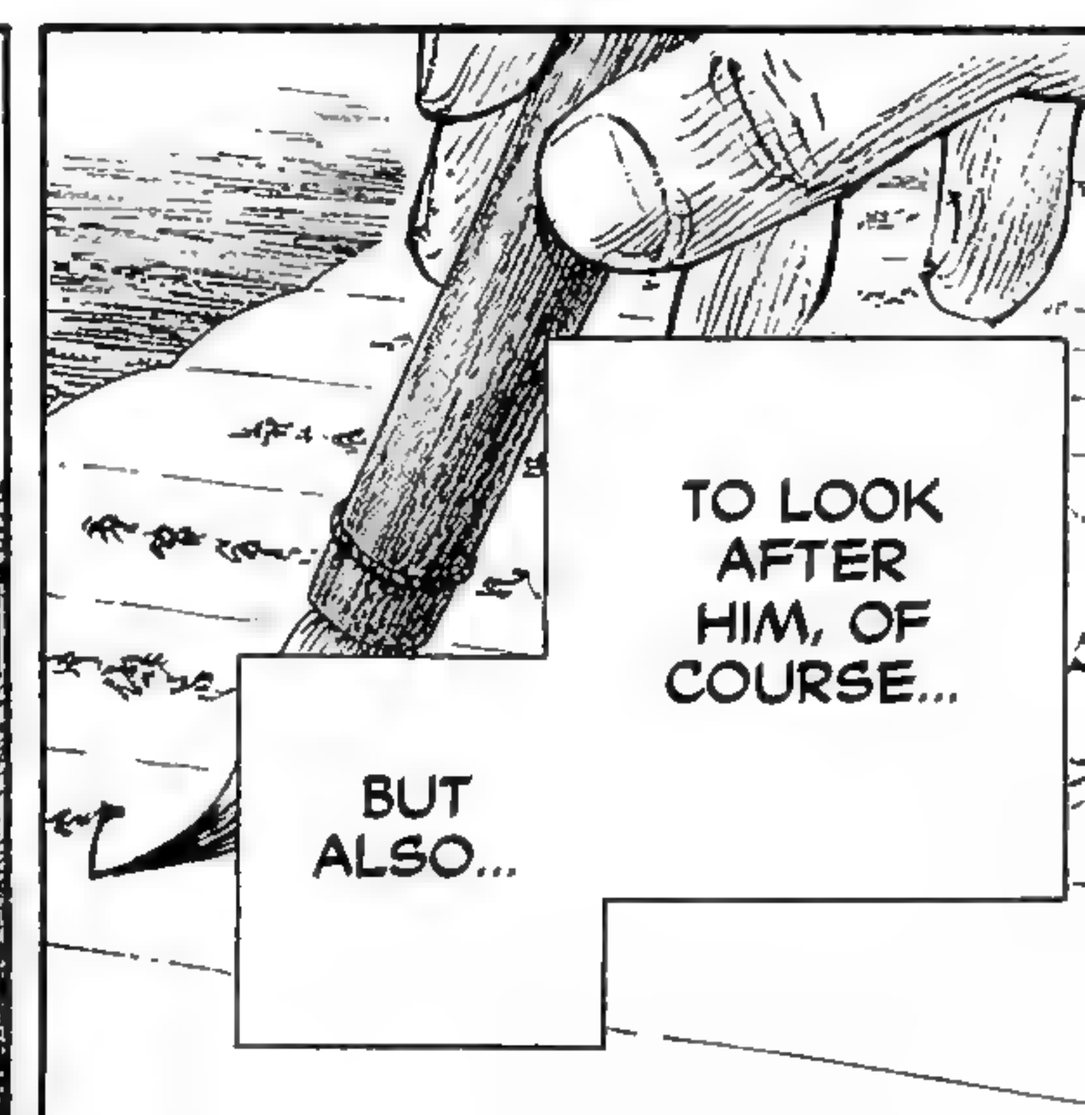

YOU'RE COLD?
BUT IT'S SO HOT OUT HERE, SHUSAKU.


WHAT?
OH NO!
!
YOU'RE BURNING UP!

THIS SUMMER IS EXCEPTIONALLY HOT...

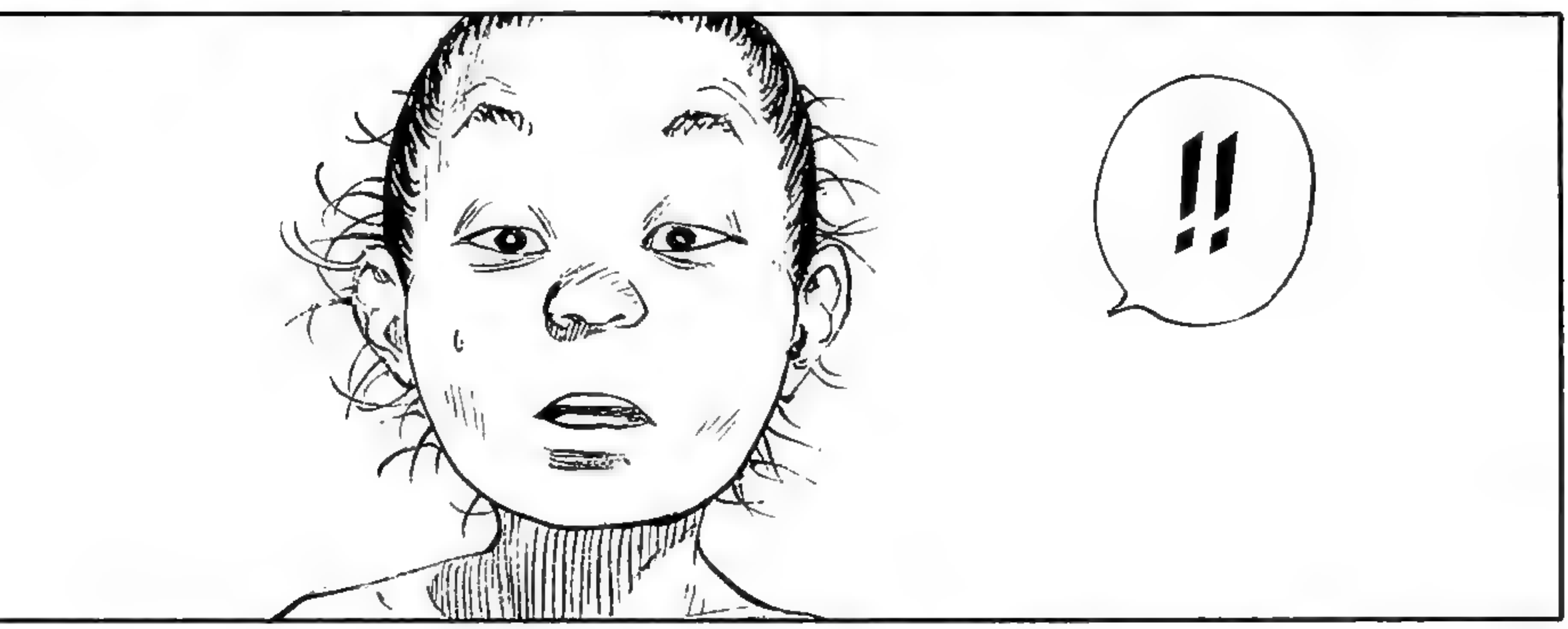
THE HEAT SAPS AWAY AT YOUR STRENGTH.

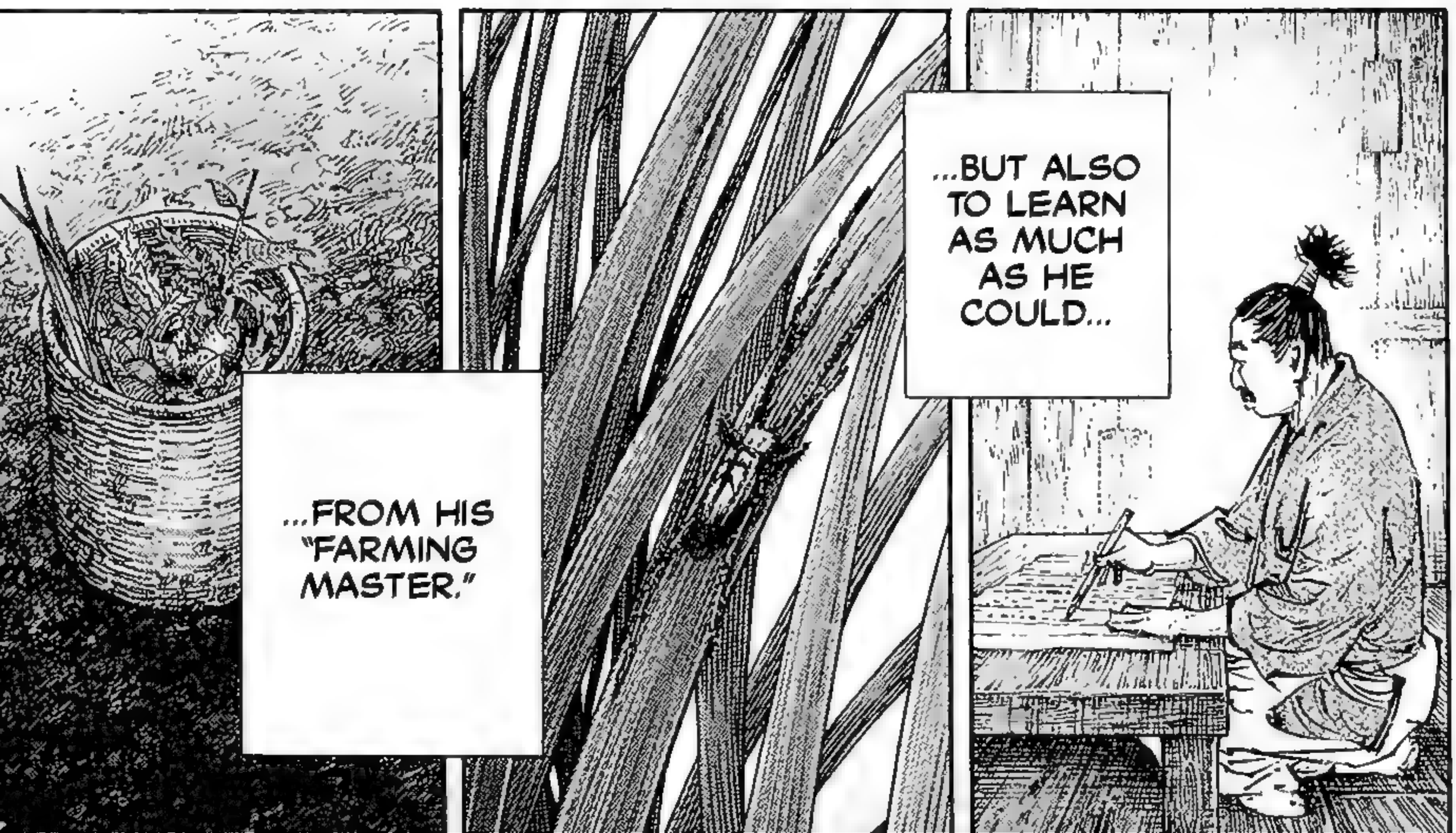




MUSASHI MAY HAVE PROMISED TO SERVE THE KOKURA CLAN, BUT HIS APPOINTMENT IS DELAYED. YOU SEE, HE WAS ADAMANT ABOUT STAYING...

...UNTIL THE HARVEST."





YOU SHOULD REST INSIDE.
HUH?

LOOK AT THE FLOWERS.

WHAT?

THE RICE FLOWERS.

THESE ARE FLOWERS?

THEY'RE TINY.

PLEASE.

MAY WE HAVE A GOOD CROP.

LOOK AT THESE EARS.

WHEN I'M OUT IN THE FIELDS...

I FEEL WORSE WHEN I REST.

...ALL THE HUMAN POISON GOES AWAY.

WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY HUMAN POISON?

?

FEAR...

DOUBT...

THAT'S WHAT THE POISON OF MAN IS...

THESE FIELDS JUST DON'T HAVE IT.

I MUST ADMIT I HAVE NO IDEA...

...WHAT THE FORMIDABLE MIYAMOTO MUSASHI...

...HAS TO LEARN FROM A DECREPIT PEASANT.

THE ONLY THING I KNOW FOR CERTAIN ...

... IS THAT I AM TO BRING MUSASHI TO KOKURA AS SOON AS THE HARVEST IS OVER.

COME NEXT YEAR'S HARVEST... SHUSAKU WILL NO LONGER BE OF THIS WORLD.

IT IS ODD. AS THIS MAN WEAKENS BY THE DAY...

...THE RICE CROPS SEEMS TO GROW, AS IF IN EXCHANGE FOR HIS LIFE.

MUSASHI ...

AND THE CRANKY OLD MAN...

...NOW SEEKS OUT MUSASHI'S COMPANY.

MUSASHI ...

HE USED TO ONLY TALK TO HIS CROPS.

UNBELIEV-ABLE...

MUSASHI WOULD PASS ON SHUSAKU'S WORDS...

...TO THE OTHERS ...

...AND PROCEEDED TO LEAD THE SMALL VILLAGE.

!!

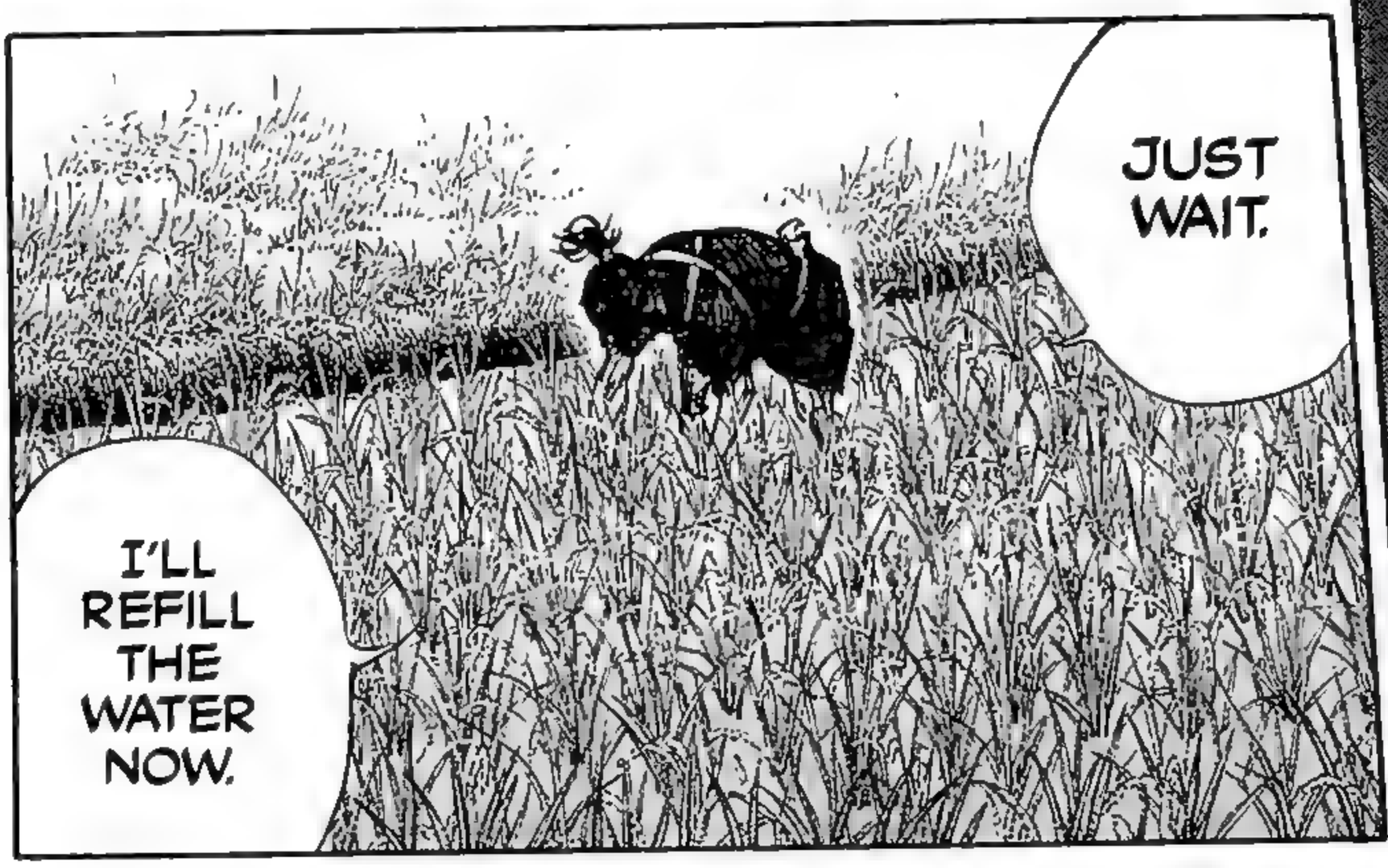
YOU TAKE CARE, IORI.

WELL I WISH YOU THE BEST.

THE HARVEST IS COMING.

#322 Akitsu

WATER'S TOO WARM.


JUST WAIT.
I'LL REFILL THE WATER NOW.

WHEW ...
LOOK AT THOSE EARS...

EVEN I'M GETTING EXCITED LOOKING AT THEM... HEH HEH.
SOME HAVE BEEN LOST TO DISEASE...
SOME EATEN BY BUGS...
WE HAD TO GET RID OF A THIRD OF THE CROP...
WHAT?
I SAID THAT'S FINE...
WHAT A SHAME.
THAT'S FINE...

NOTHING GOOD HAPPENS WHEN YOU TRY FOR MORE...

...THAN WHAT'S NECESSARY.

WHAT'S NECES-SARY...

EVEN IN YOUR WORLD...

THERE CAN'T BE ANYONE...

...WHO'S UNDEFEATED.

I HAVEN'T BEEN...

YOU WERE BEGINNING TO LOOK THE PART.

I WAS BEGINNING TO WORRY YOU MIGHT BECOME A FARMER.

HM? THAT GET UNDER YOUR SKIN?

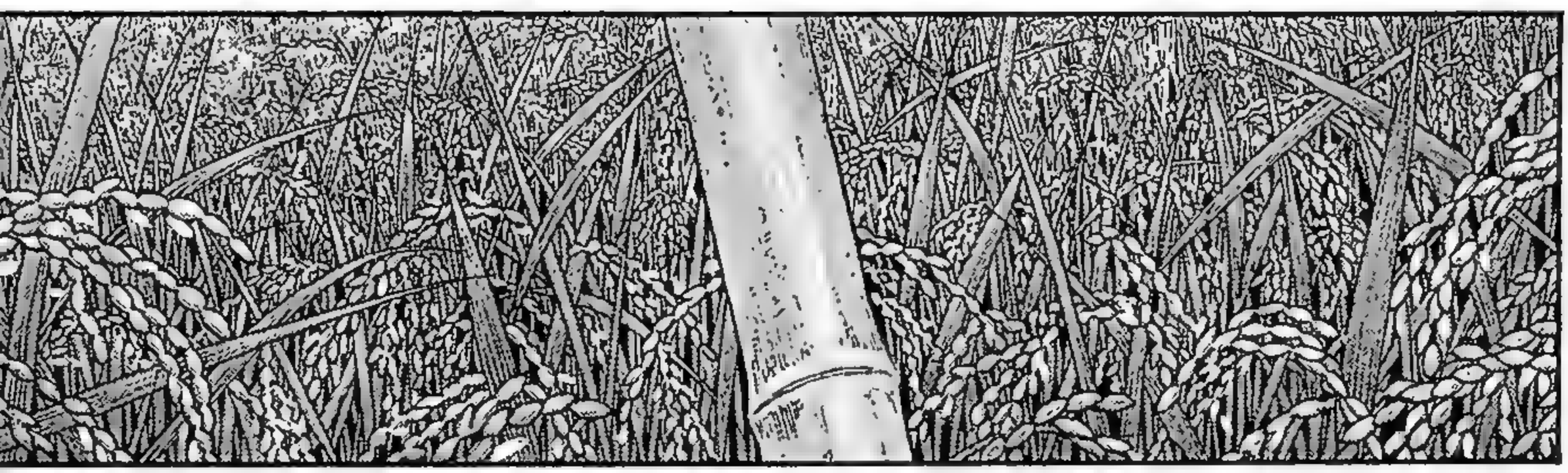
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?

THEN I GUESS I HAVE NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

GIVE ME A HAND.

I WANT TO LOOK AT THE FIELDS.

HMPH.



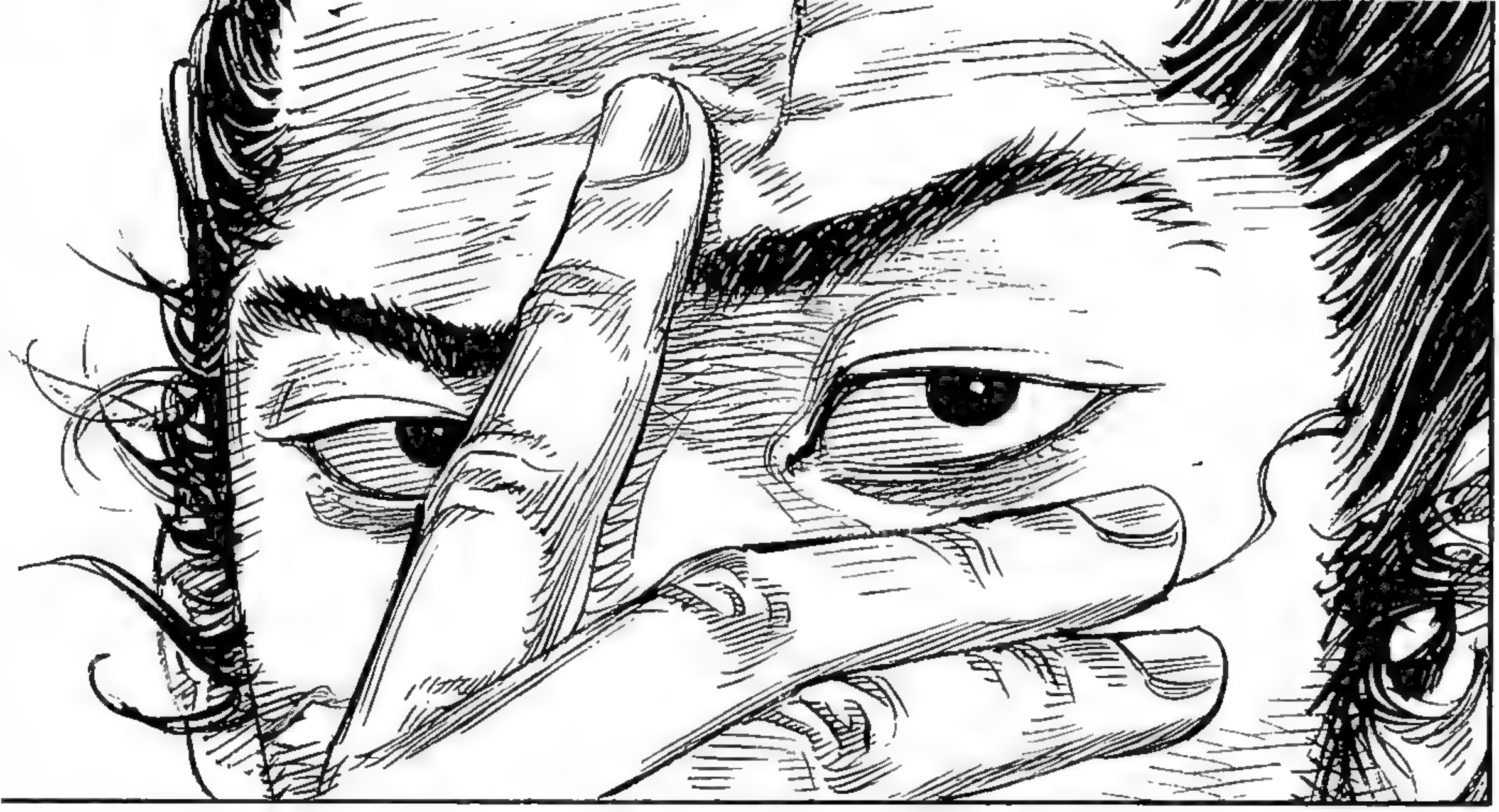
...

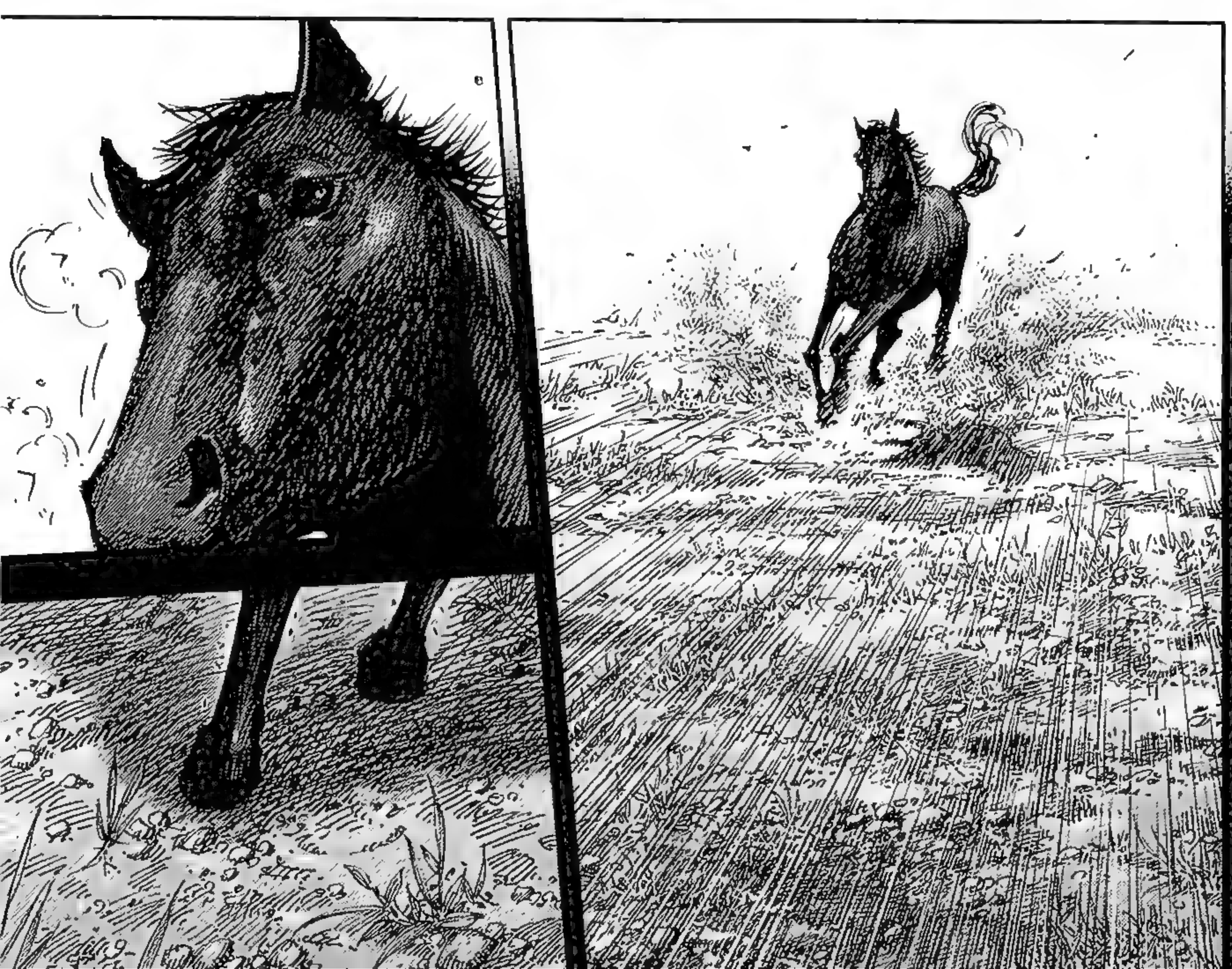
YOU SHOULDN'T BE OUT HERE!
SHUSAKU!!

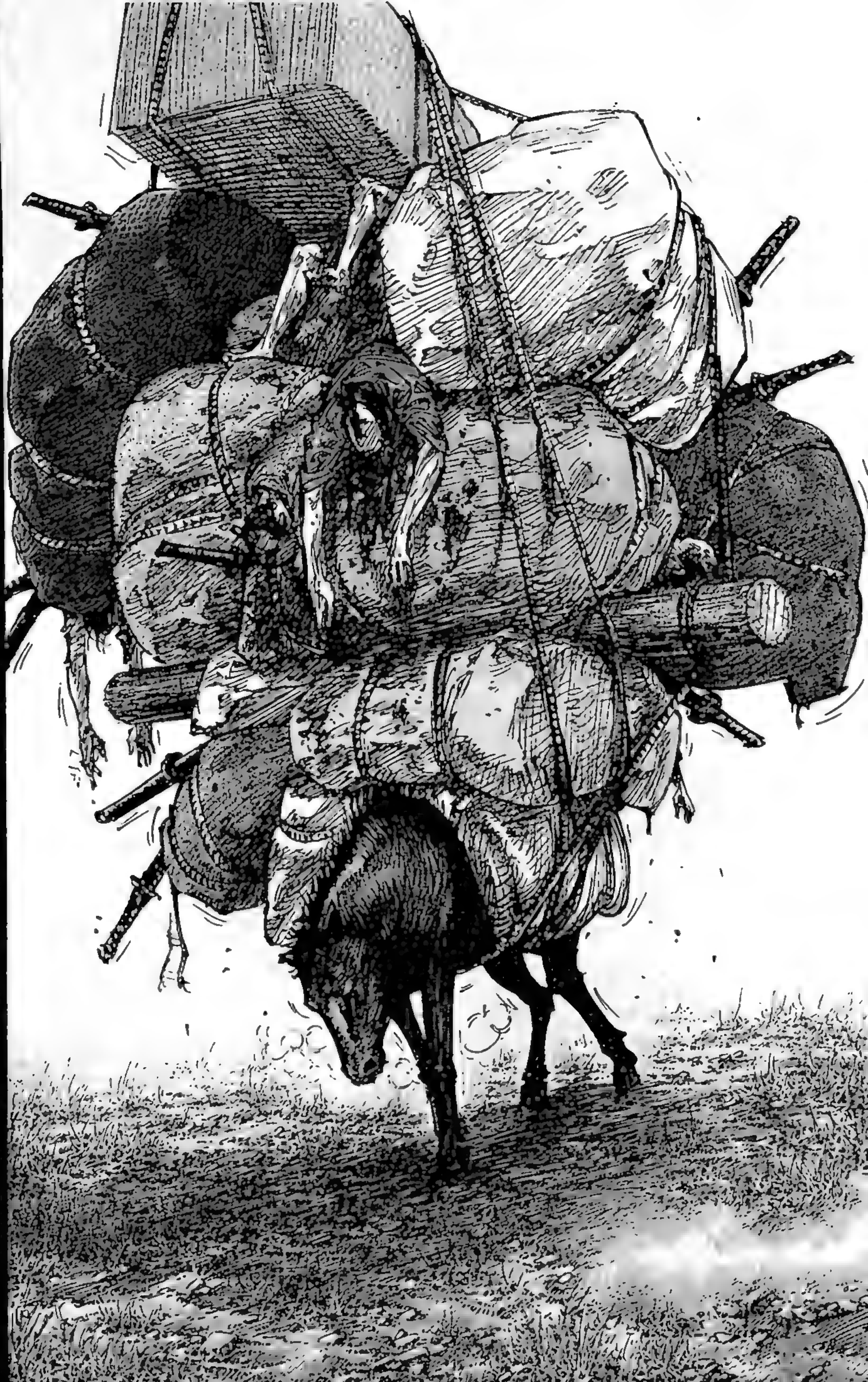
...BRINGING YOUR JOURNEY TO AN END.
SOON YOU'LL BE SERVING KOKURA CASTLE...

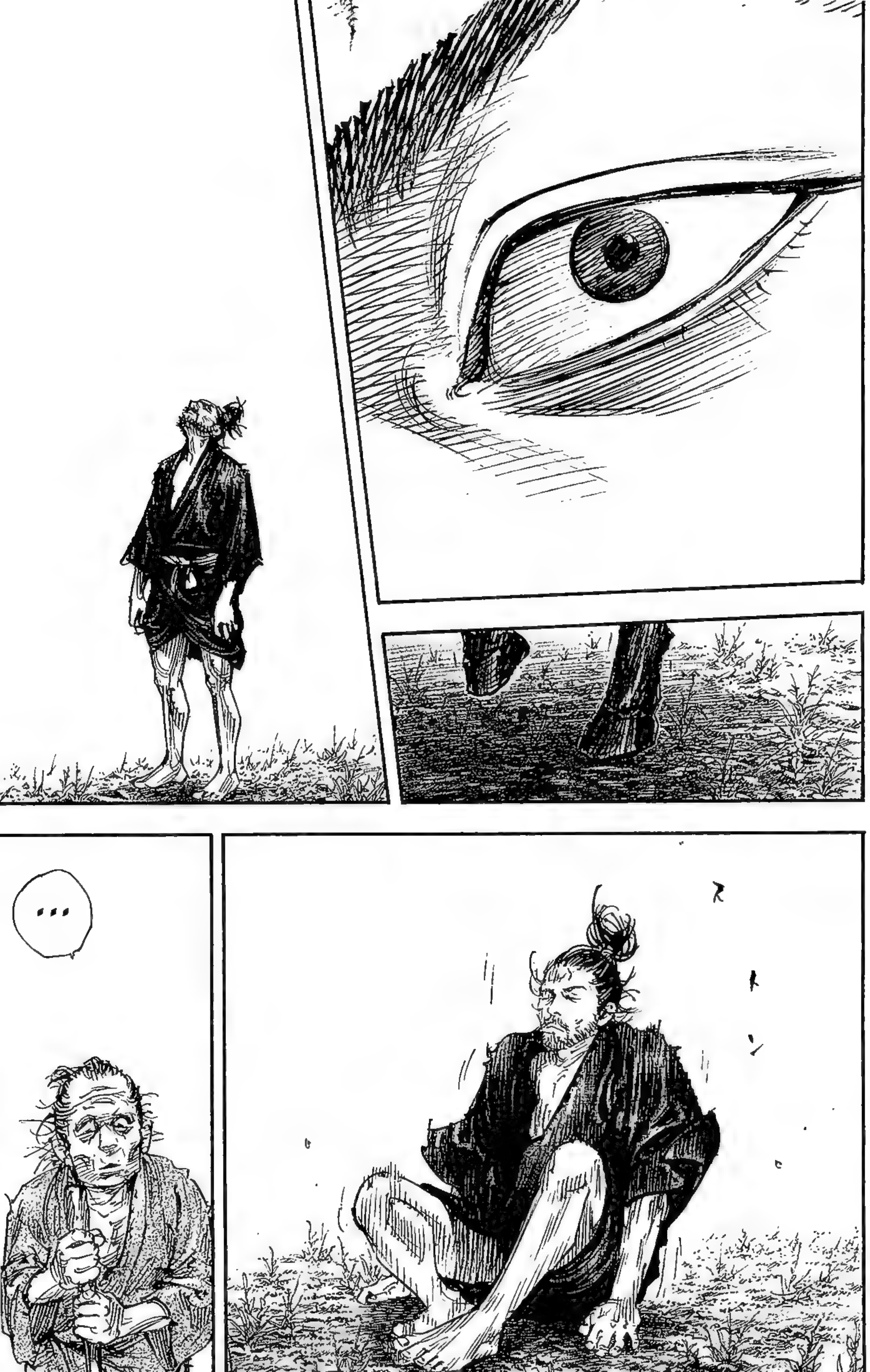
WHAT KIND OF PATH DID YOU FOLLOW?

WHAT KIND OF JOURNEY WAS IT?



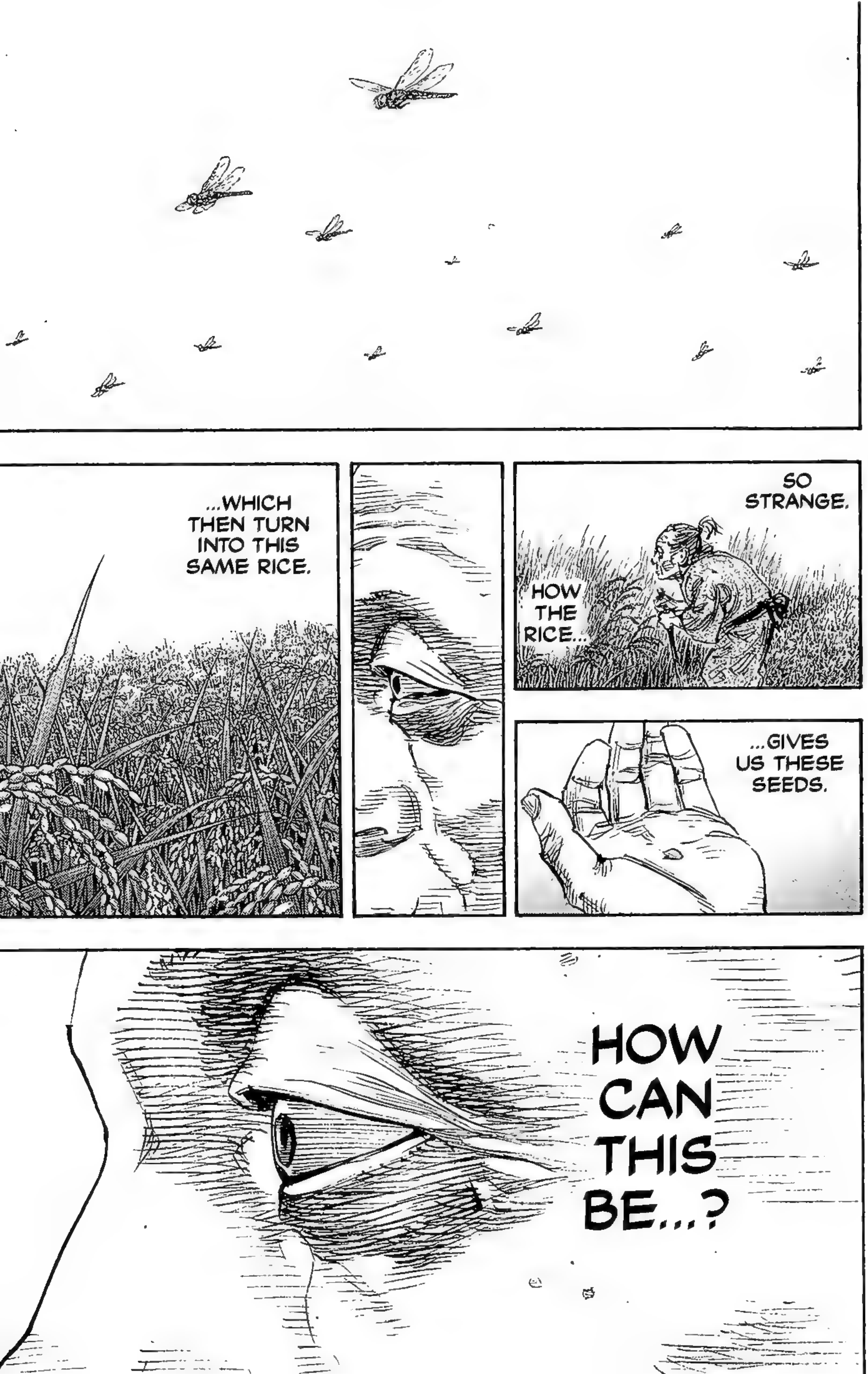






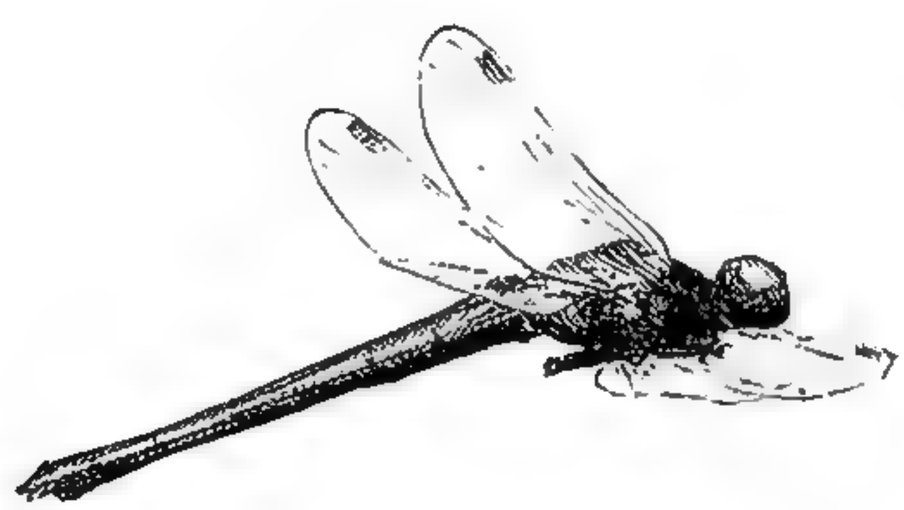
THAT'S A NICE SMILE YOU HAVE THERE.

SOMETHING CHANGE YOU HERE IN THIS VILLAGE, MUSASHI?

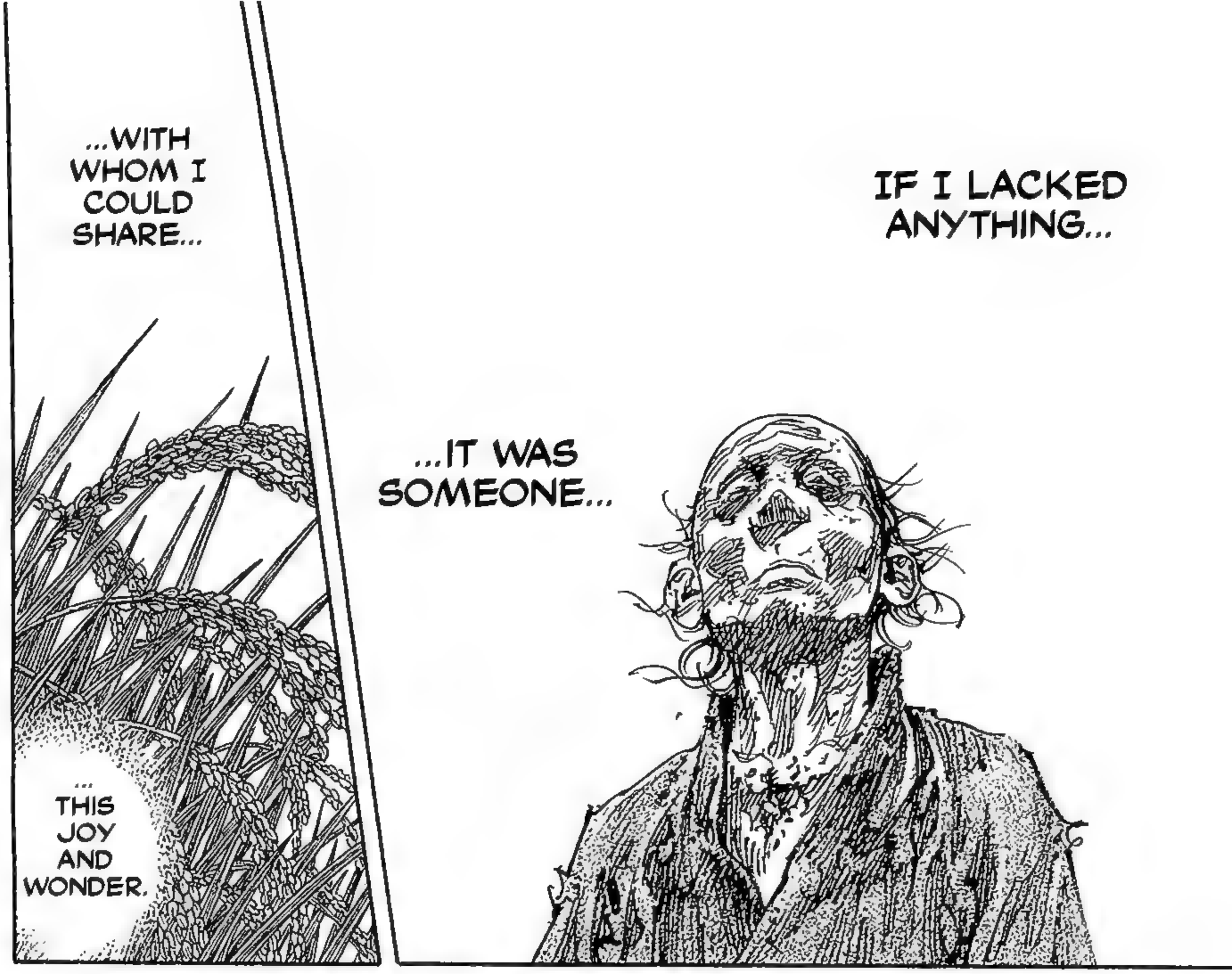

...WHICH THEN TURN INTO THIS SAME RICE.
SO STRANGE.
HOW THE RICE...
...GIVES US THESE SEEDS.
HOW CAN THIS BE...?

I DON'T FEEL LACKING IN ANYTHING.

I AM GRATEFUL.



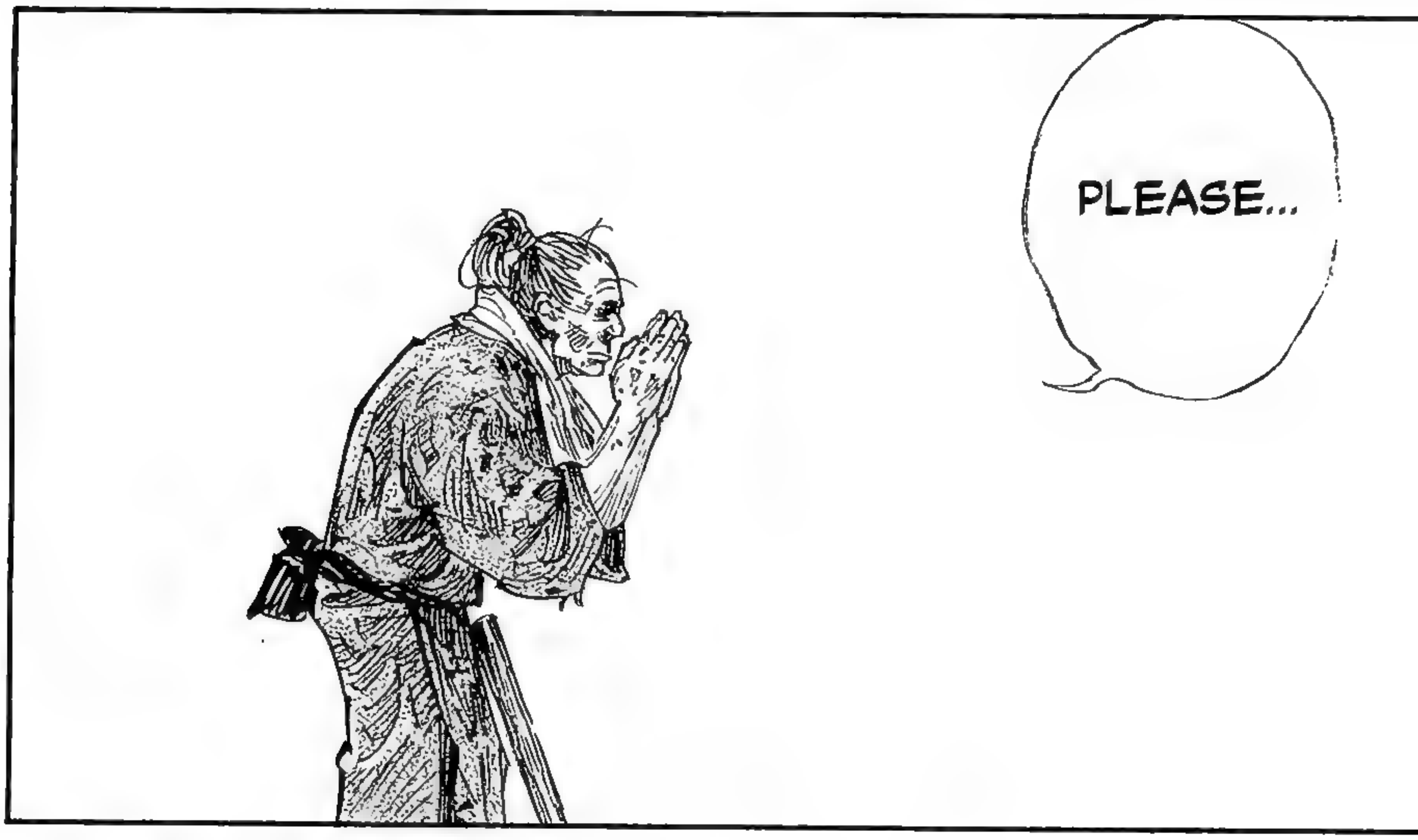
!!
SHUSAKU?!
SHUSAKU?!
OOPS...
JUST FELT A LITTLE DIZZY.
OH...


...WITH WHOM I COULD SHARE...
...THIS JOY AND WONDER.
...IT WAS SOMEONE...
IF I LACKED ANYTHING...

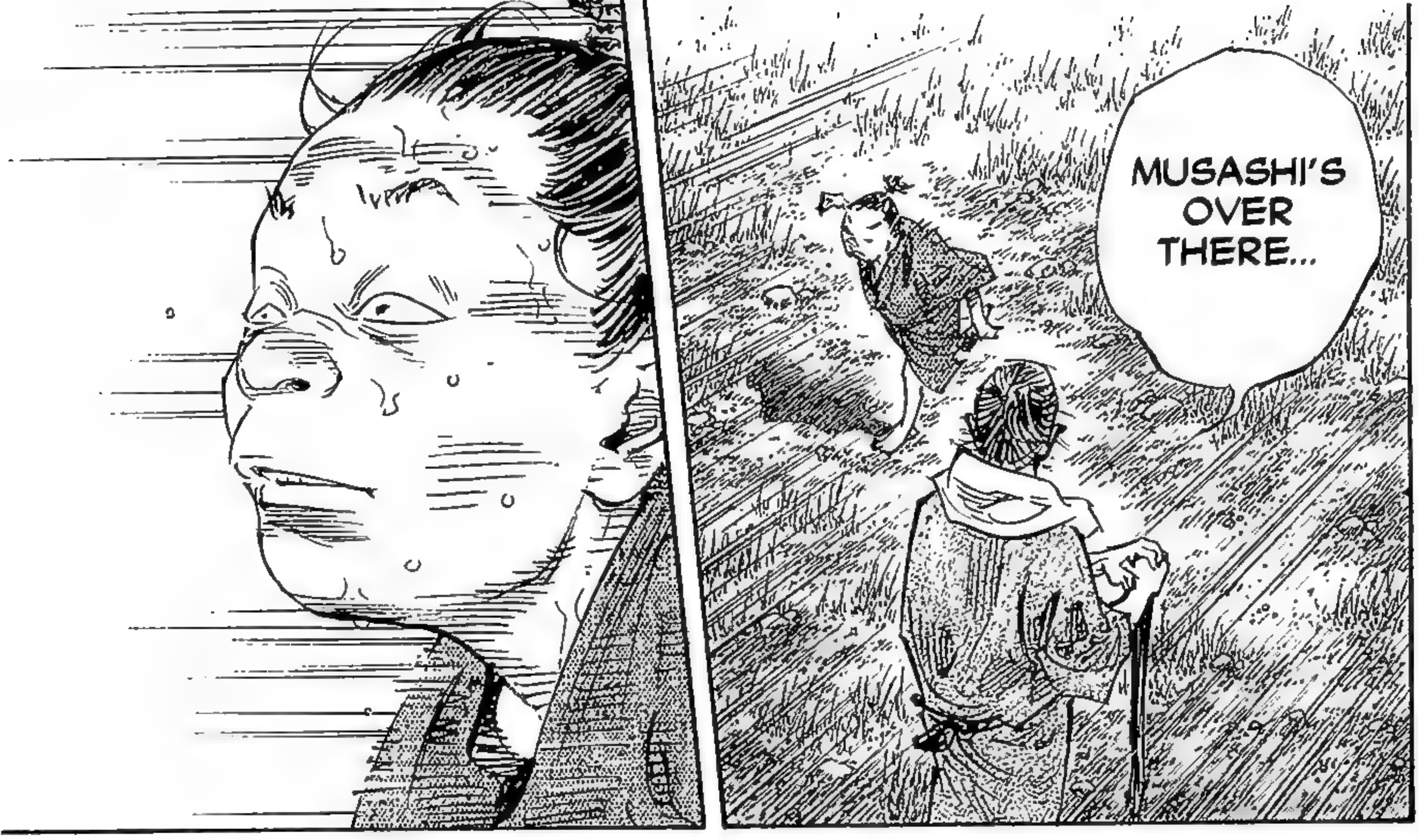
...BUT NOT IN FRONT OF OTHERS...
YOU LET IT OUT WHEN WORKING THE EARTH...
TELL ME, MUSASHI. ABOUT THAT SMILE OF YOURS.

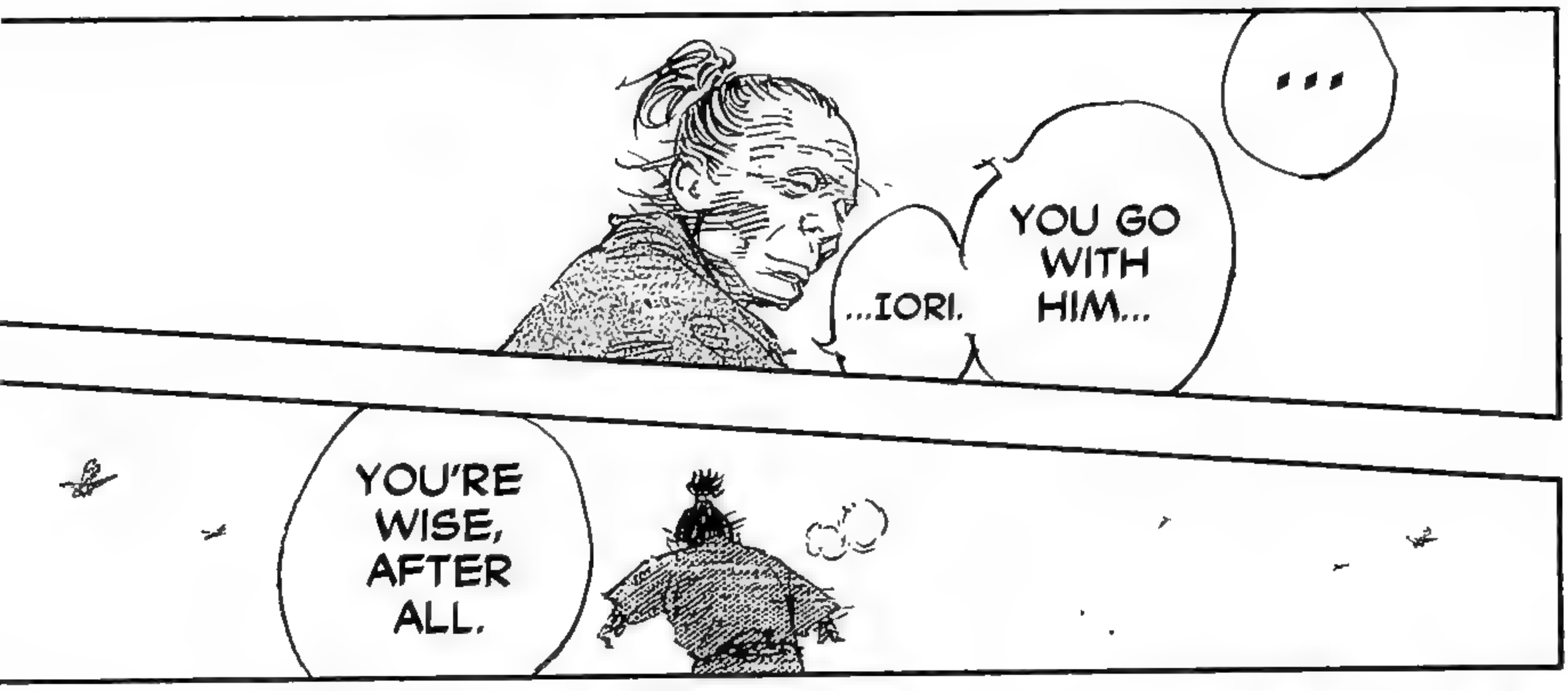
LOOK...
CONGRATU-LATIONS, MUSASHI.
...MUST MEAN YOU'VE MADE A MARK.
SERVING A CASTLE...
BUT YOU MAKE SURE...
THE FIELDS THOSE SCUM PLANTED.
THEY'RE SPREADING.
...YOU KEEP ONE FOOT ON THIS SOIL TOO.

NEXT YEAR THEY'LL BE MORE OVER HERE...
...OVER THERE.
...

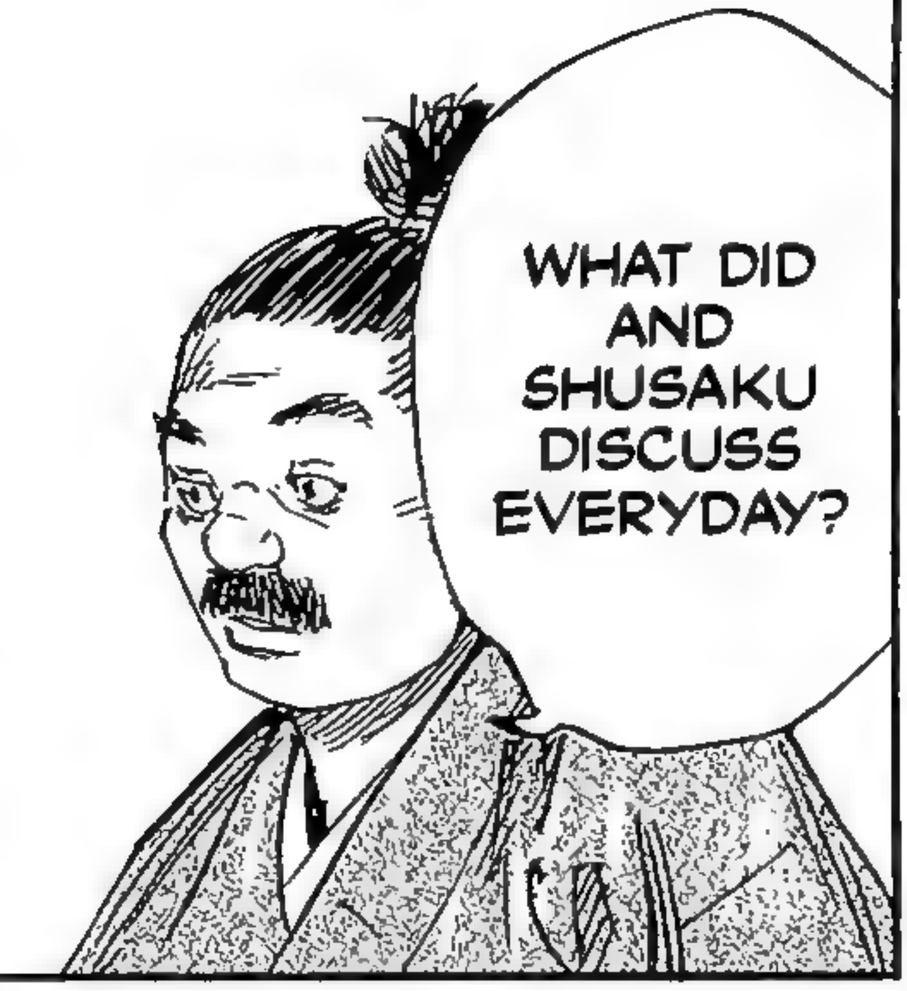

PLEASE...

WHAT'S WRONG, IORI?
HM?

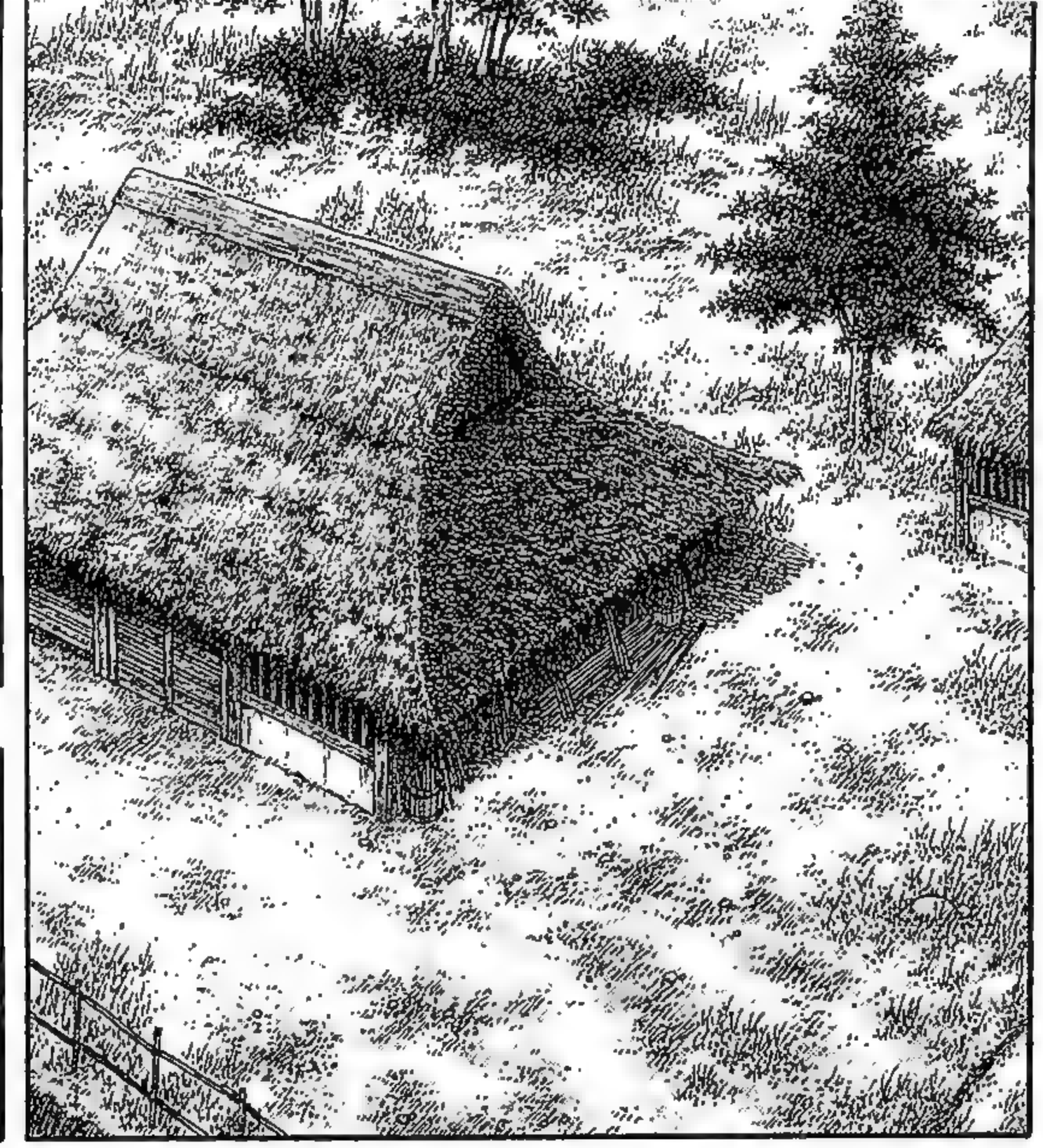

MUSASHI'S OVER THERE...


...
YOU GO WITH HIM...
...IORI.
YOU'RE WISE, AFTER ALL.

...
JUST LIKE YOUR DAD...


WHAT DID AND SHUSAKU DISCUSS EVERYDAY?

...



WHO DO WE GO TO NOW?
BUT THEN...

HE WOULD'VE SAID "DON'T GO ASKING ME."
WHAT? REALLY?

MUCH MORE.
...ABOUT HARVEST-ING RICE...
I SHOULD HAVE LEARNED MORE...
I SHOULD'VE GONE TO HIM...

ASK THE SOIL...

...THE GRASS...

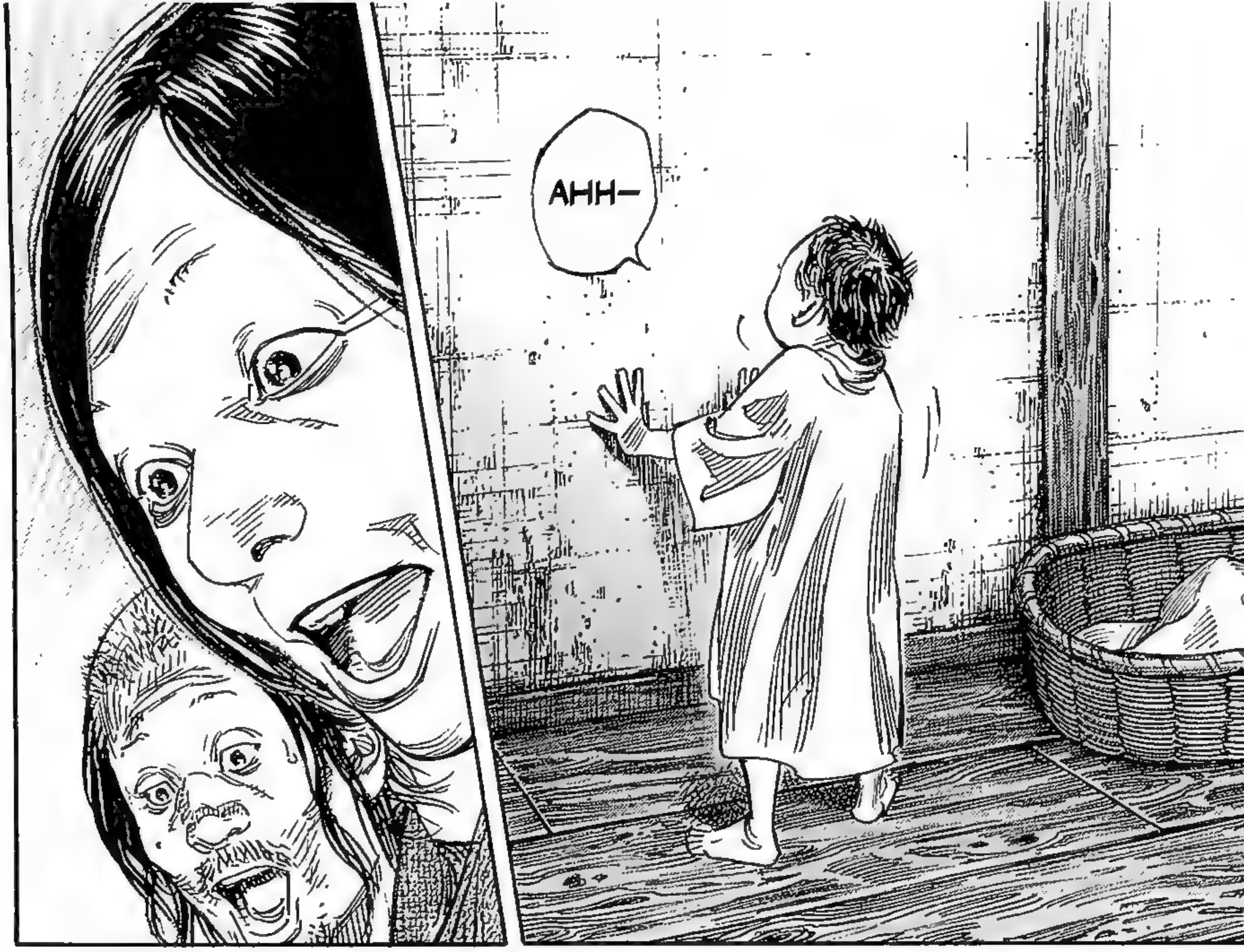
...THE TREES...

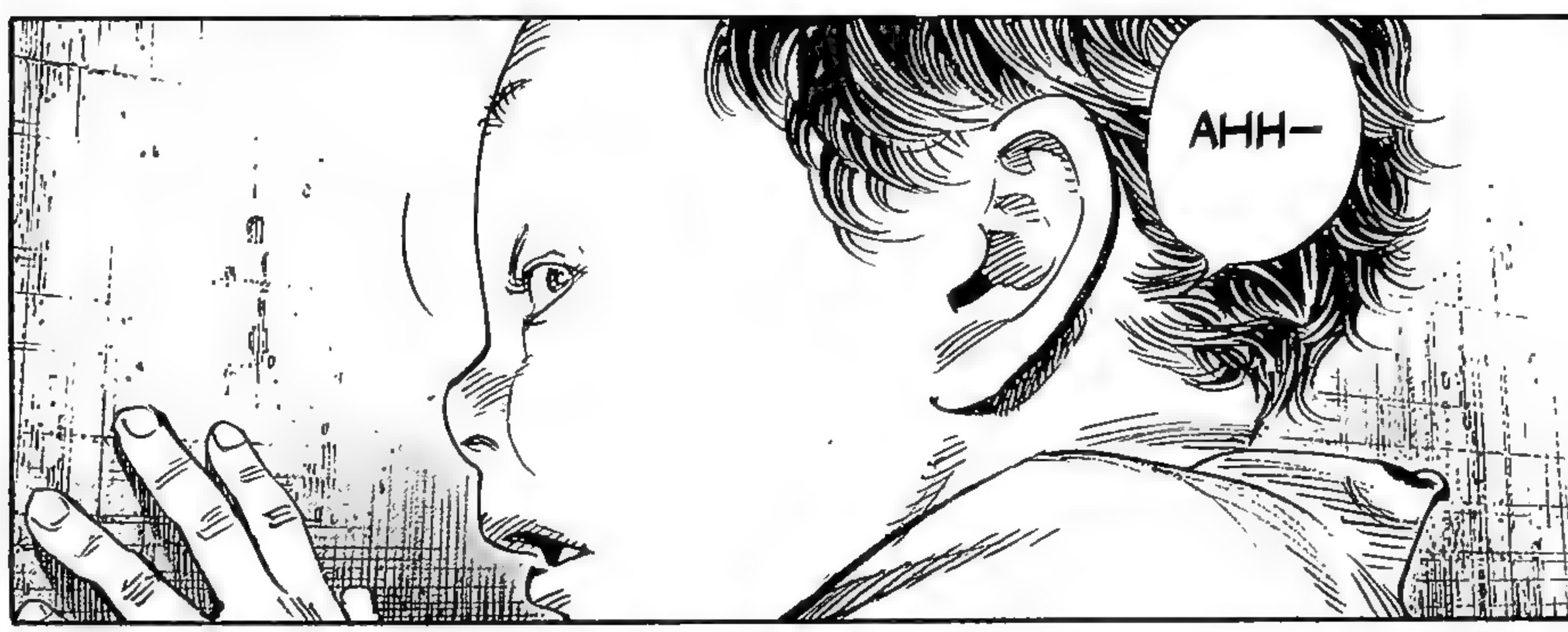
...THE RICE...

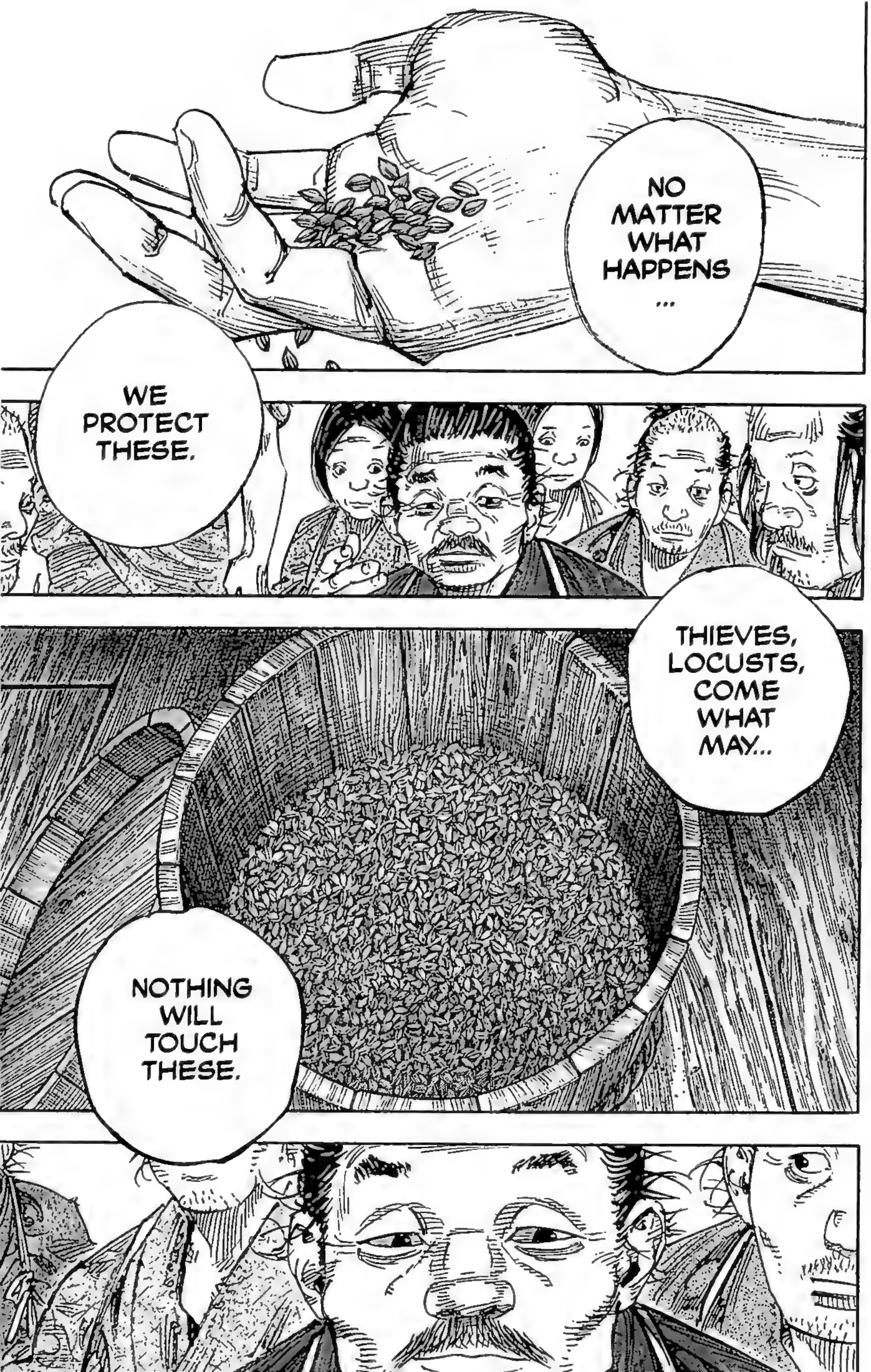
...EVERYTHING AROUND YOU...

...THE BUGS...

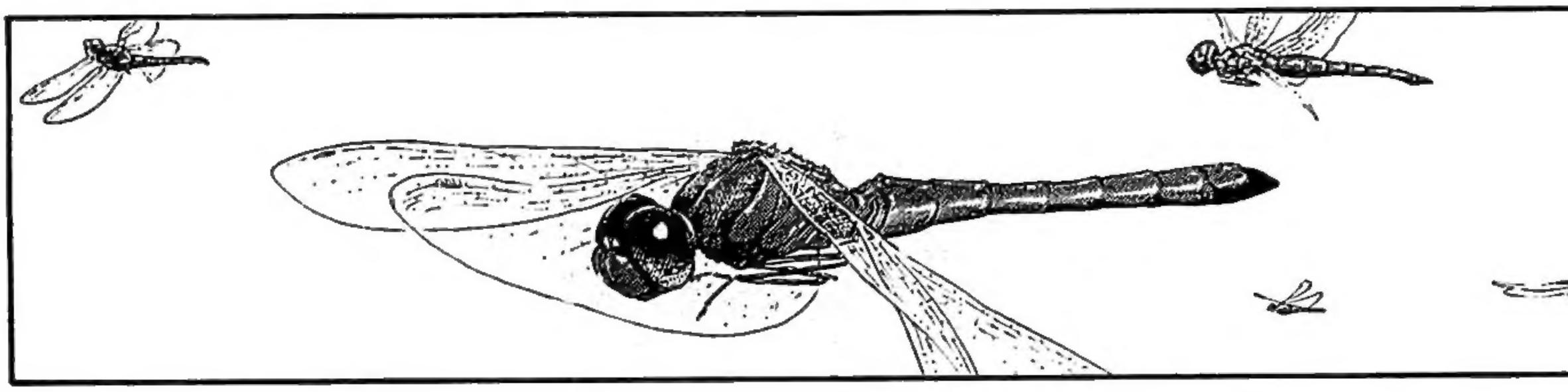
HEY!
HATSU-!!
HATSU!!


AHH—


AHH—


NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS ...
WE PROTECT THESE.
THIEVES, LOCUSTS, COME WHAT MAY...
NOTHING WILL TOUCH THESE.

THE RICE SEEDS FOR NEXT YEAR.



NOW THEN...

OUR TIME HAS COME.
AS YOU PROMISED, MUSASHI.
I'M ALL READY!!
I'VE BEEN READY!!
...

KOKURA.

剣に生き、鬼と化す――。
土に生き、土に死す――。

一世限りの孤独な鍛錬を
現世に活かす武蔵と、後世へ繋ぐ秀作。
理解し合えぬ二人の生き様は、
か弱き稲の命を介し、
交叉し、予期せぬ実を付けてゆく。

"VAGABOND" VOLUME 37.

VAGABOND BY INOUE TAKEHIKO

井上雄彦

原作 吉川英治「宮本武蔵」より

37

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VAGABOND BY INOUE TAKEHIKO

好ましいこともそうでないことも
互いに分かち合う、同時代に生きる人々がいる。
家族であれ共同体であれ、
スポーツであれ漫画の世界であれ、
連続してきた歴史がある。
空間と時間、二本の線の長さ豊かさに思いを馳せることで、
交差する点にいるひとりの自分の確かさを思い出している。

井上雄彦

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